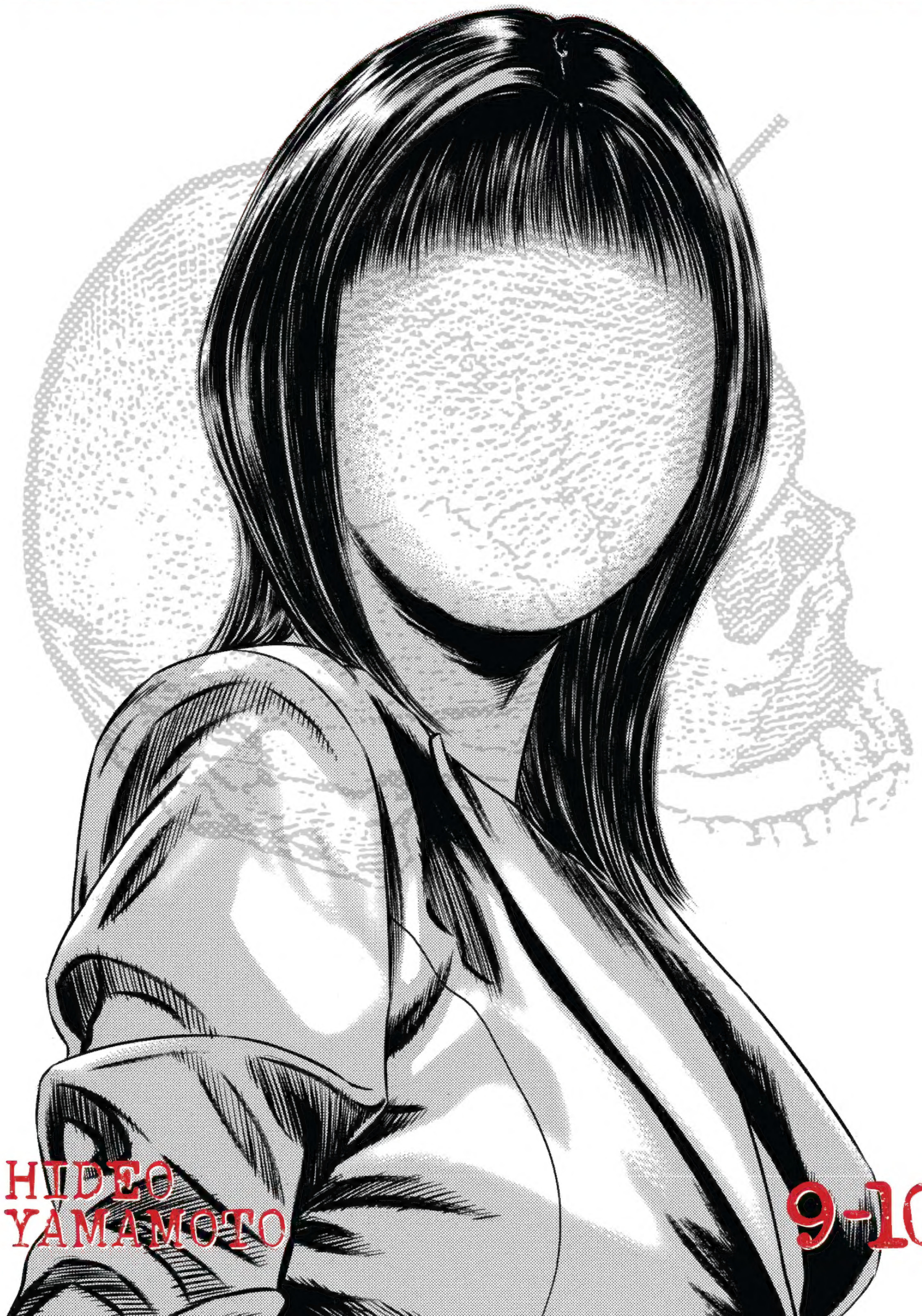


Homunculus



HIDEO
YAMAMOTO

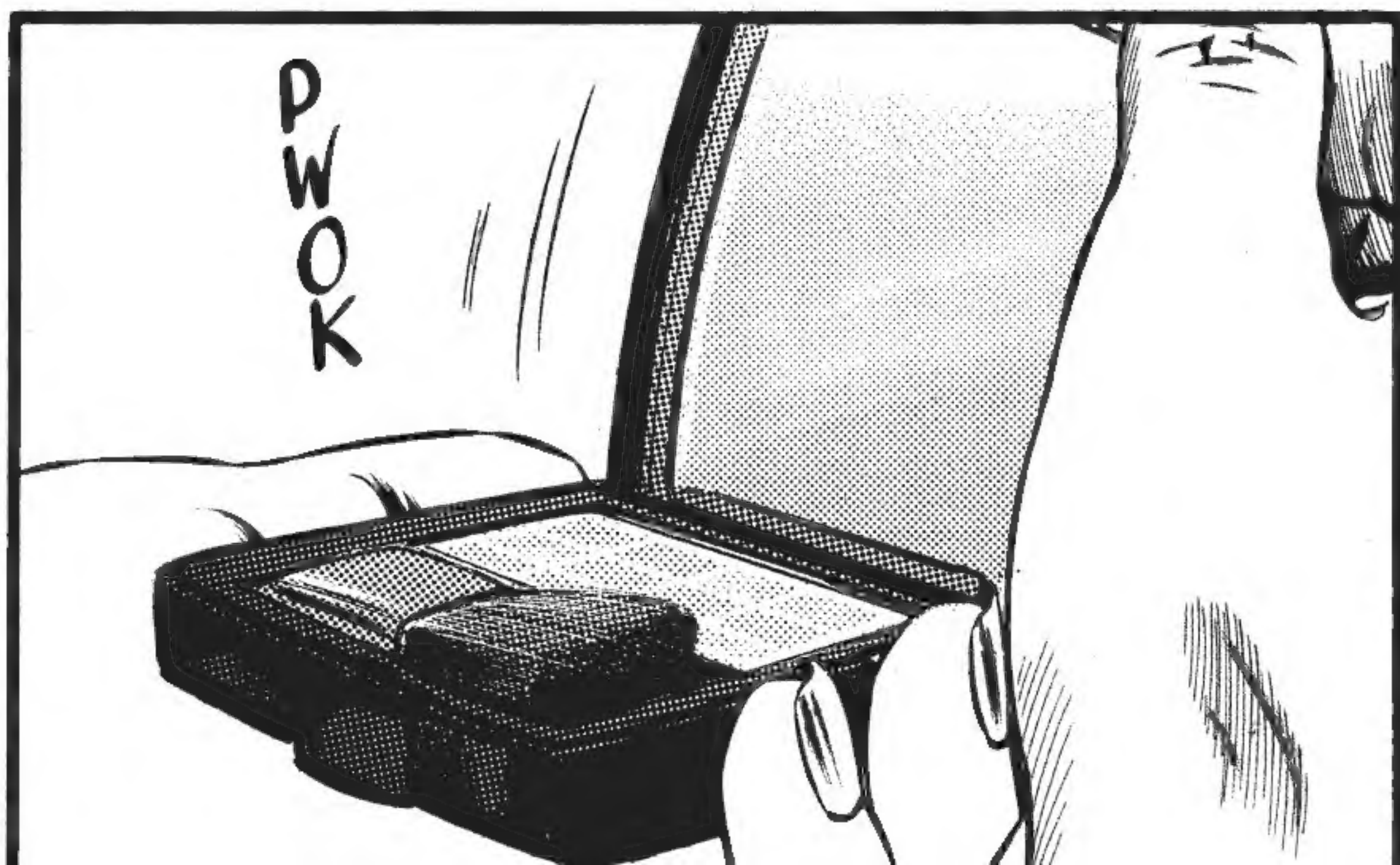
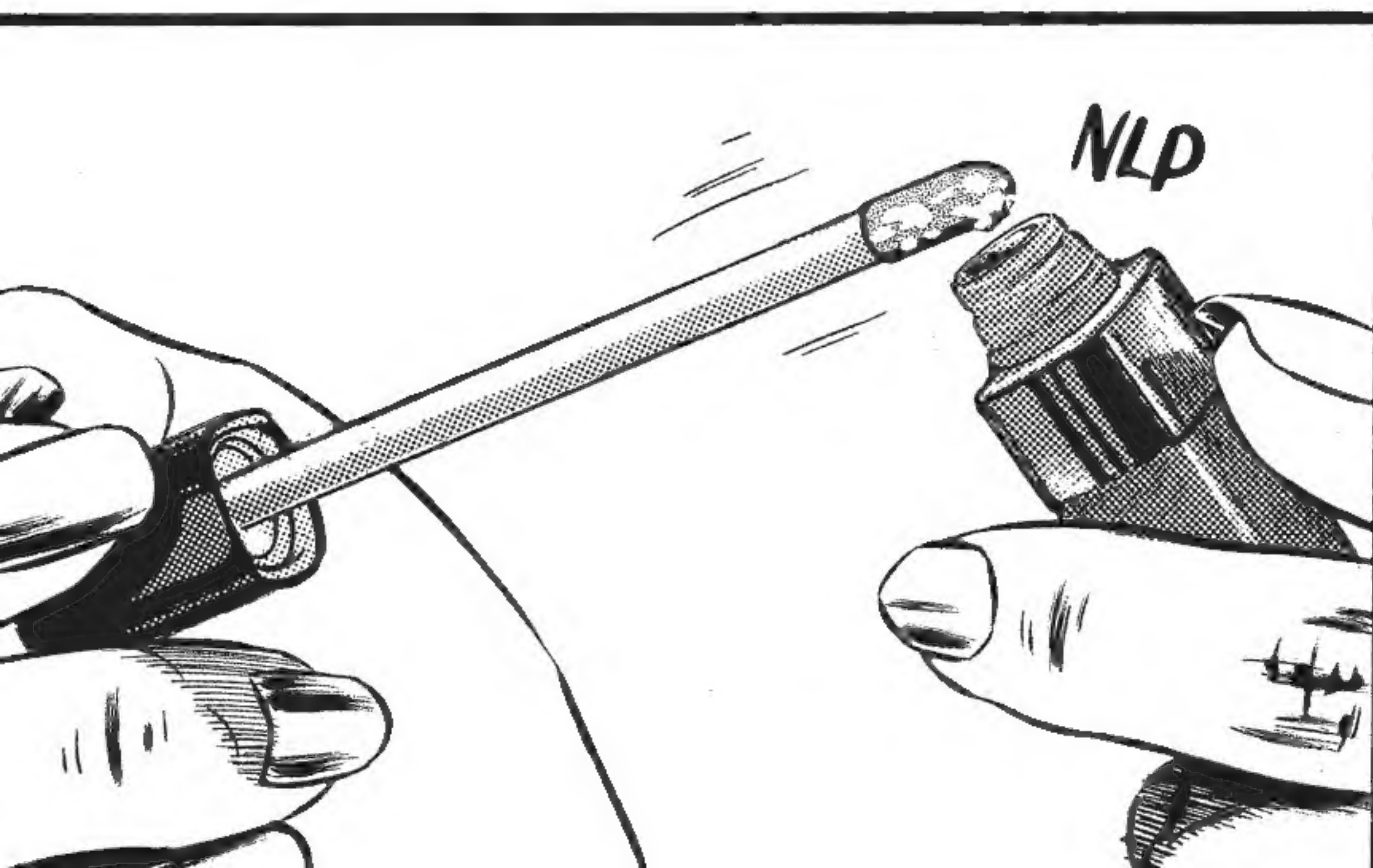
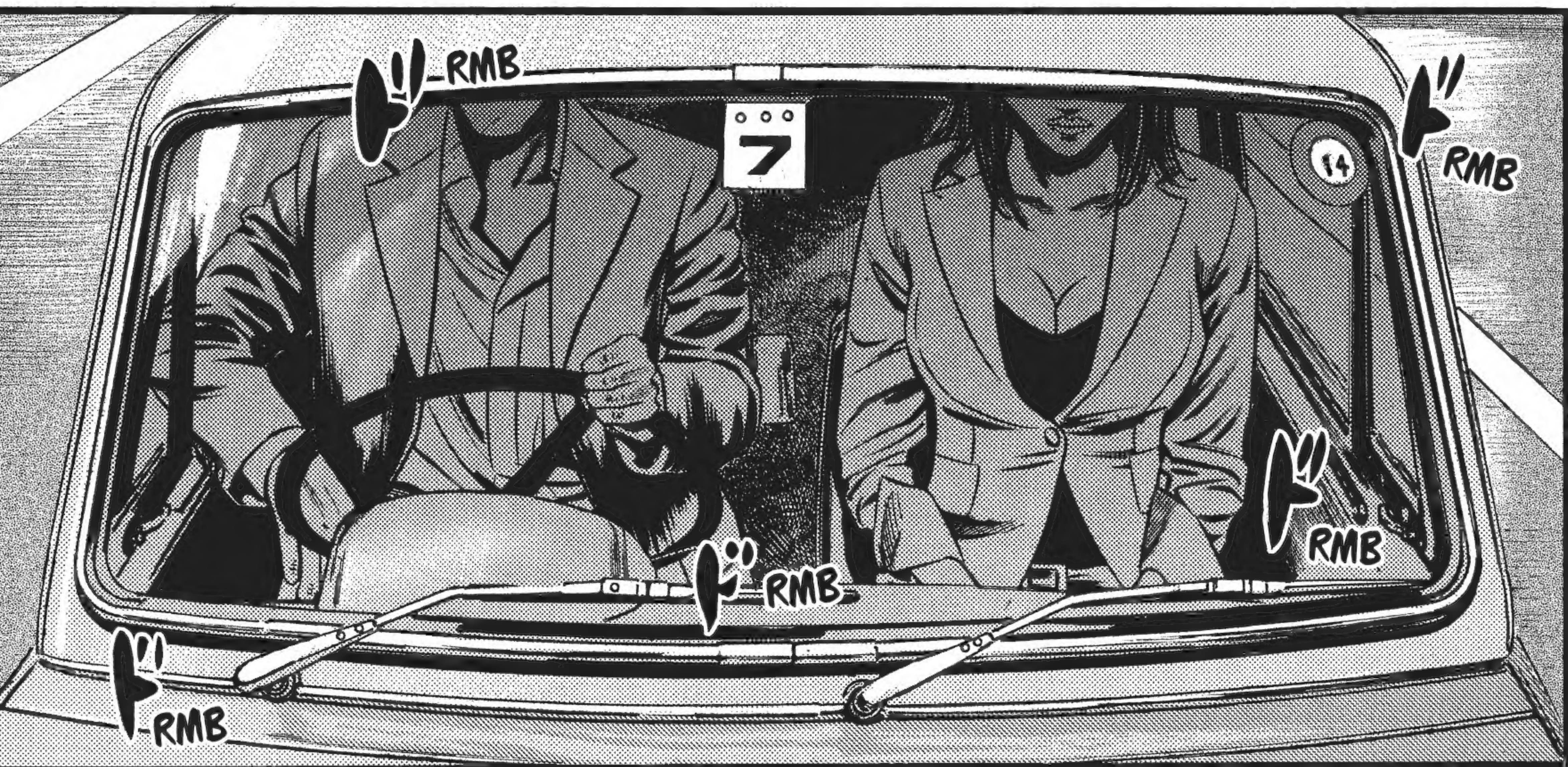
9-10

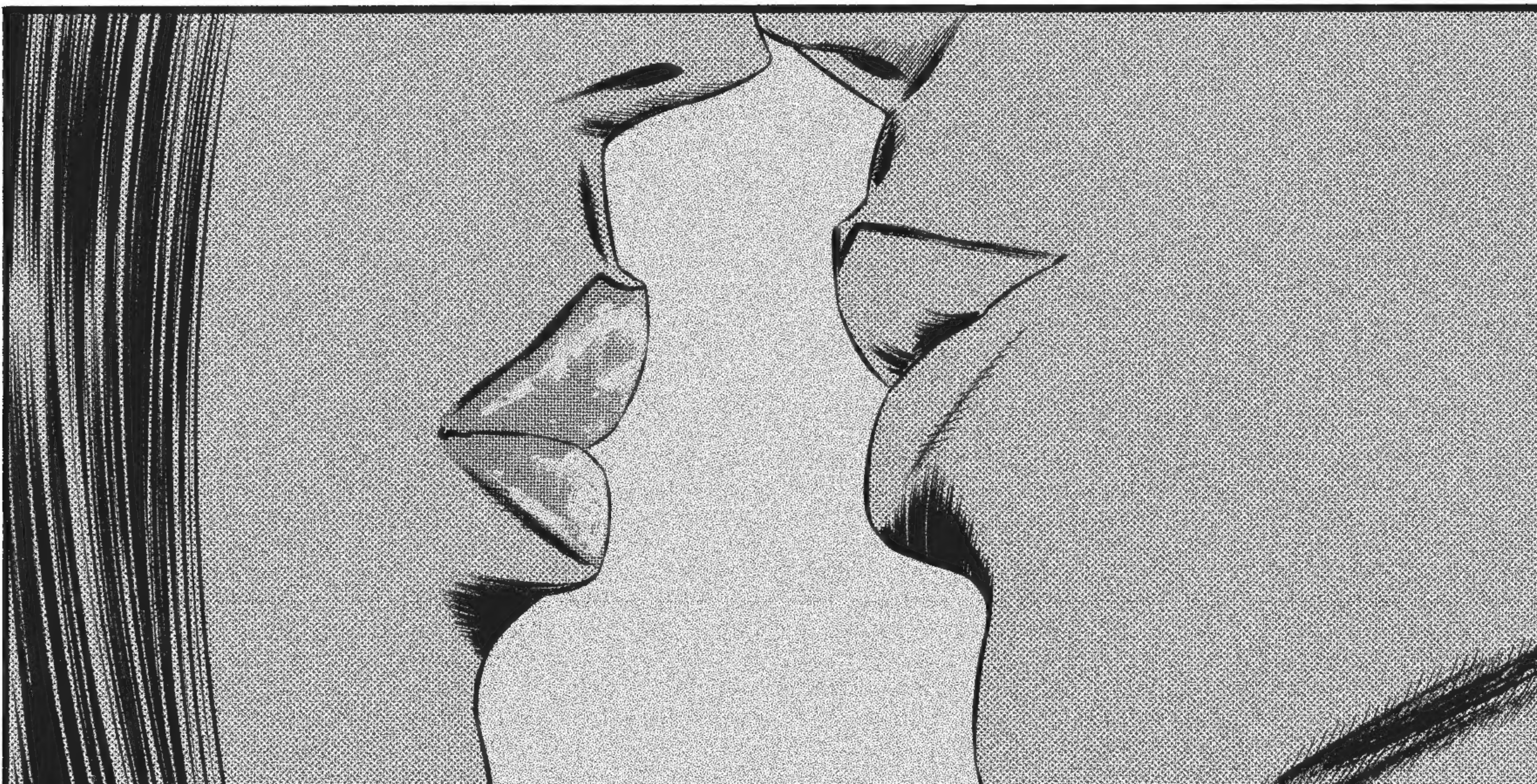
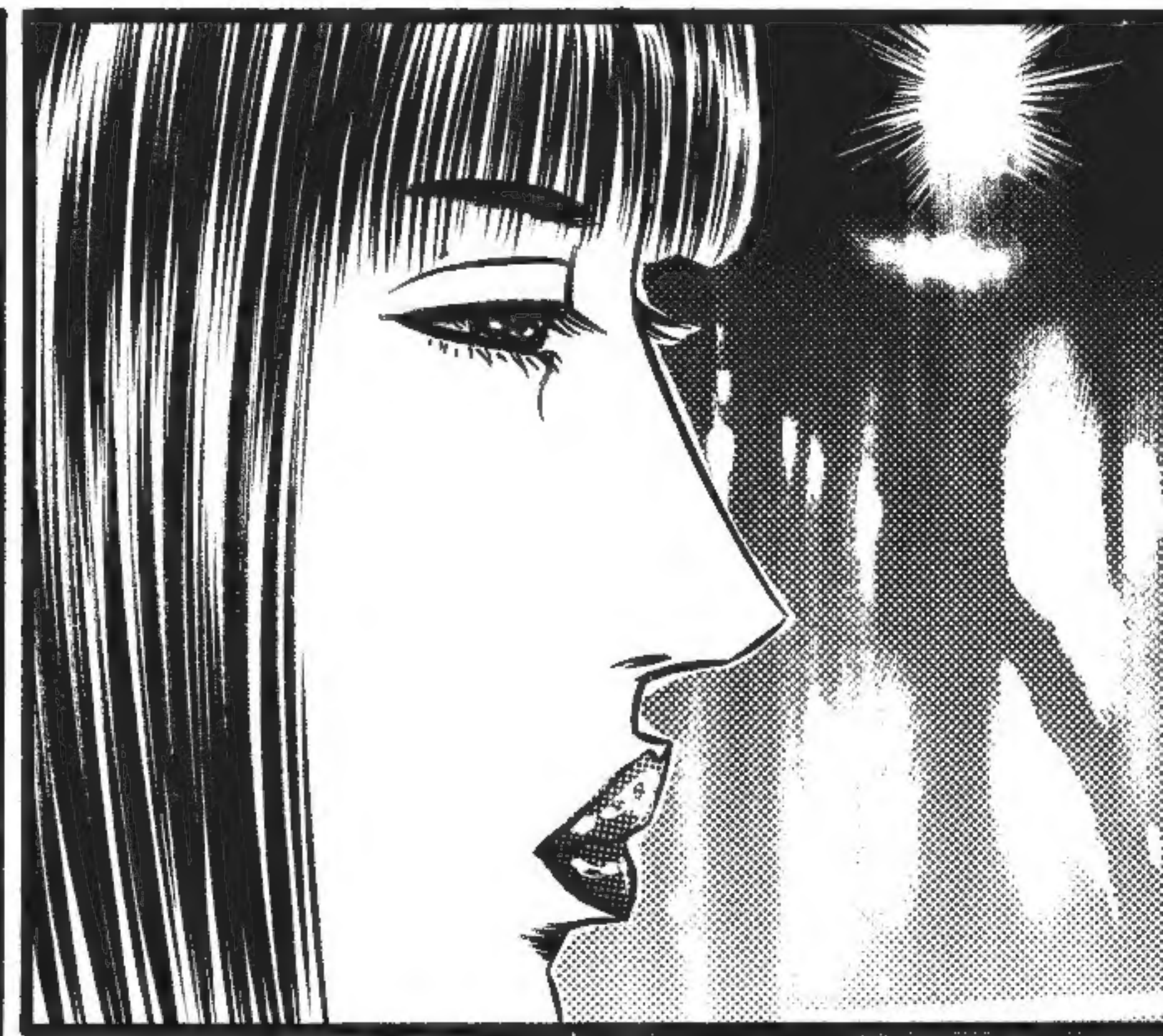
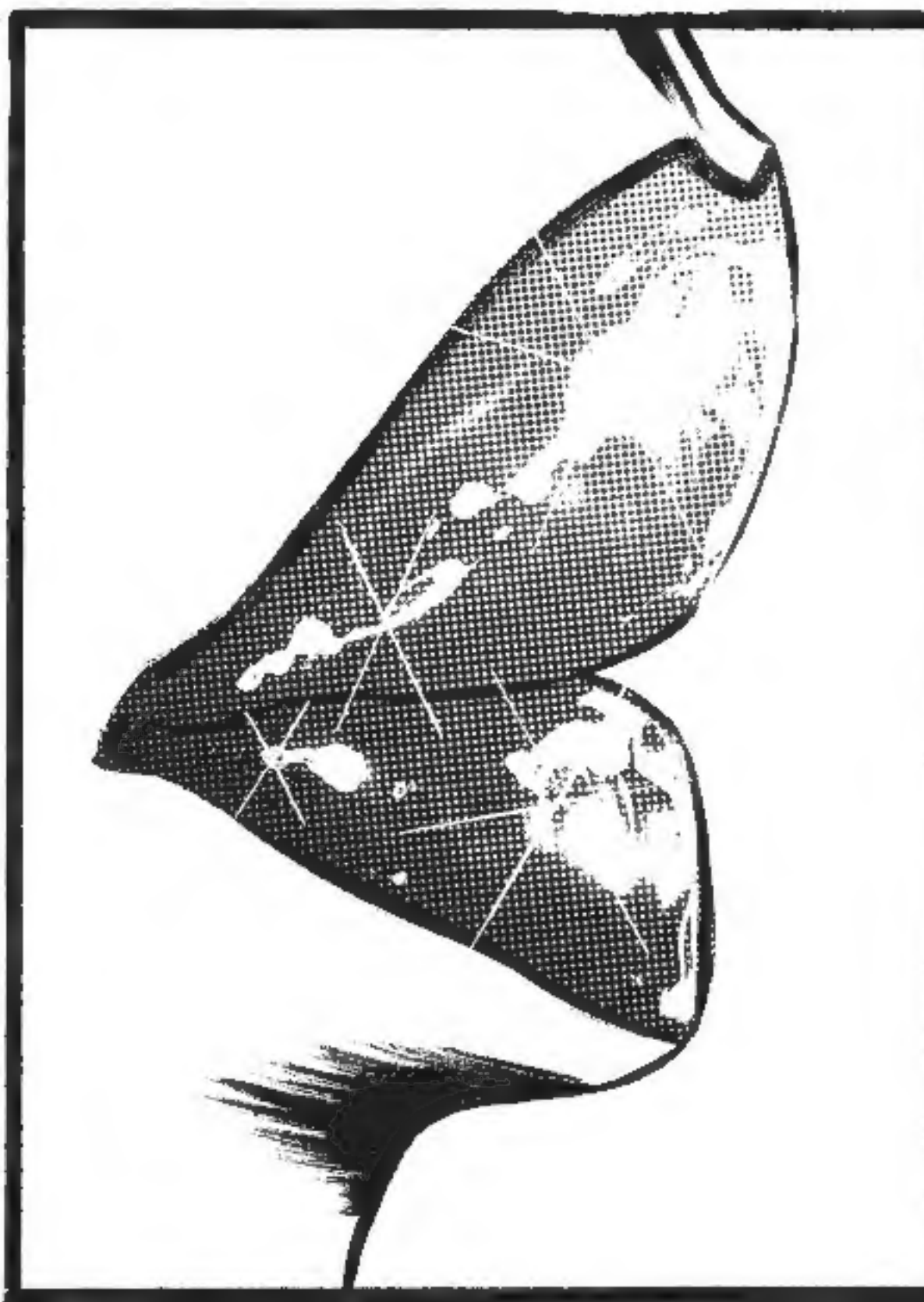
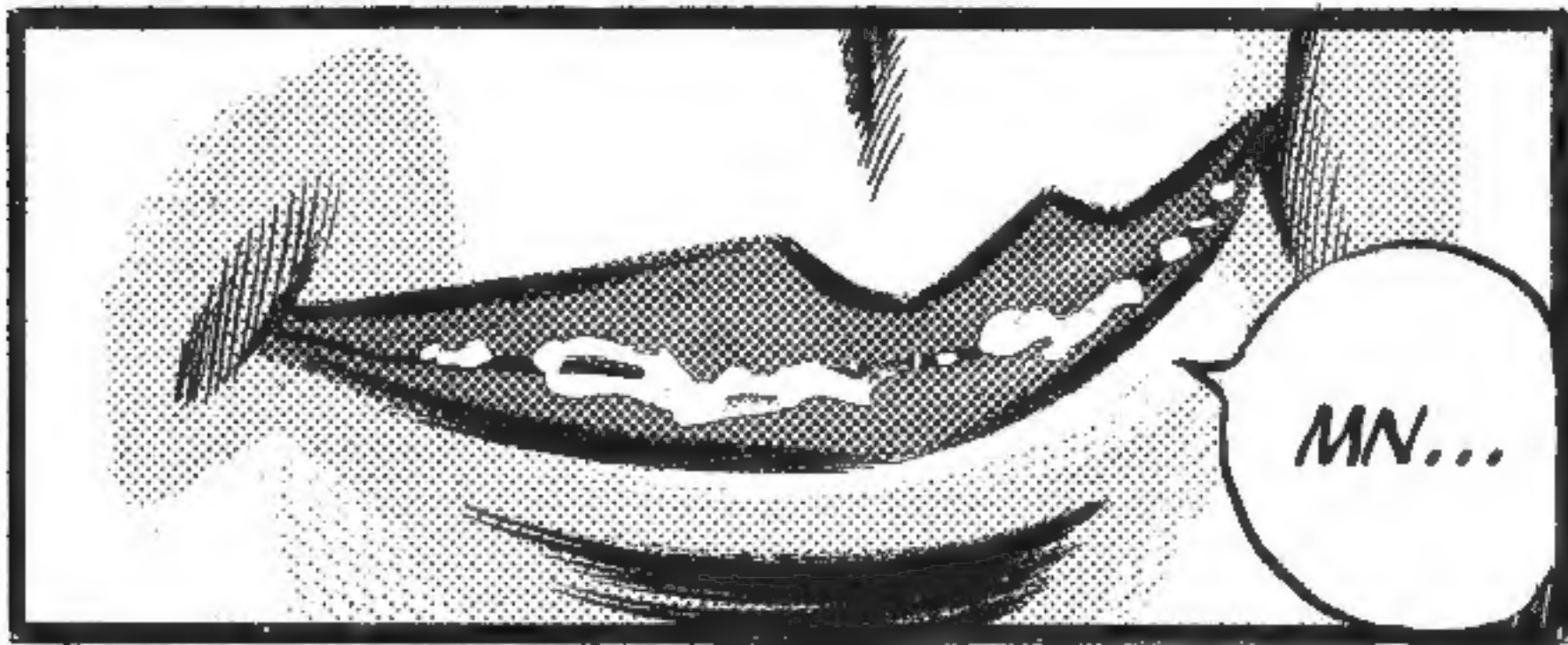


Homunculus

HIDEO YAMAMOTO

Volume 9









I might catch your dishonesty.

SMILE

~
~



TUG

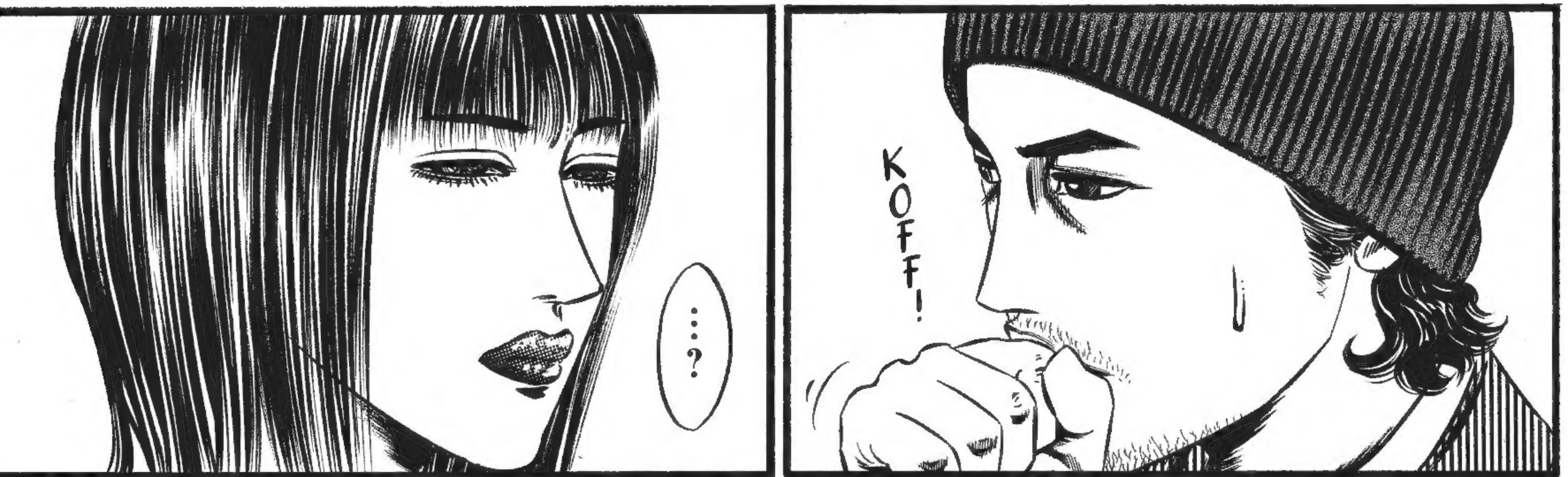


So, should I take that to mean...



Who's to say?

lips that don't lie might have a chance?







PARDON
??

DID WE
DO IT?



I'M ASKING
IF WE HAD
SEX.



UH...
N-NO.

YOU
SERIOUSLY
DON'T EVEN
REMEMBER?!

MY
GOSH!!



STARE...



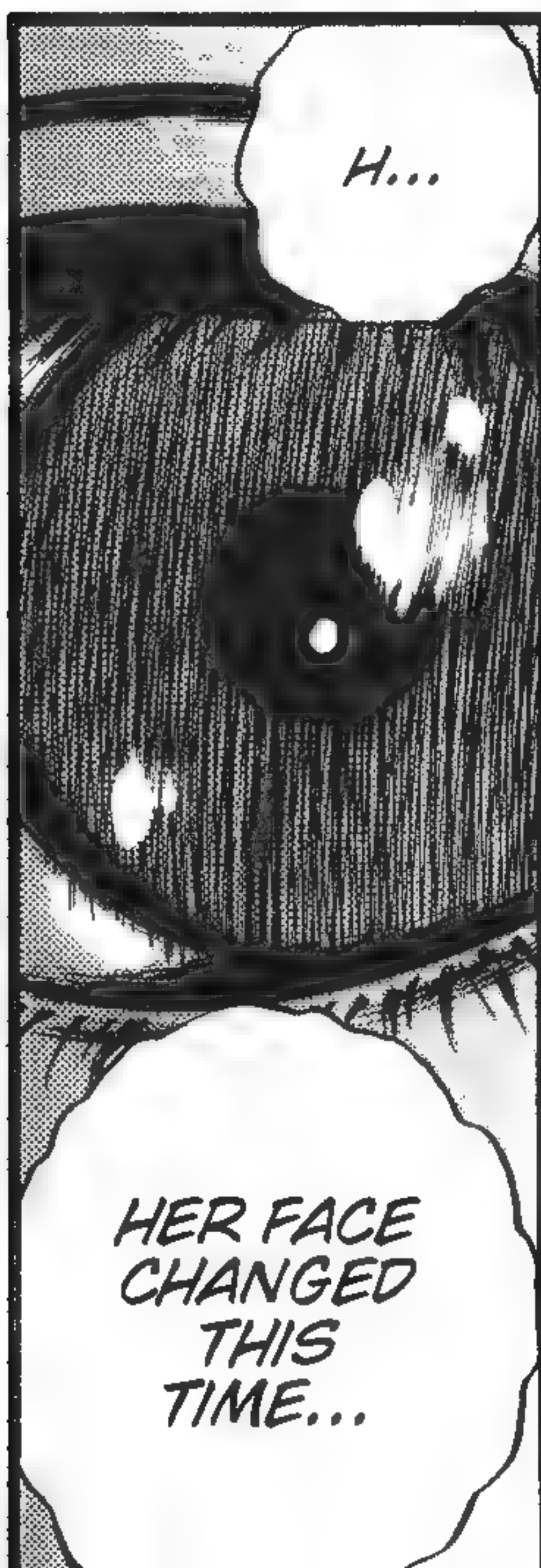
MUTTER

WHAT A CREEP...



OF COURSE
WE DIDN'T!
LIKE I'D EVER
SLEEP WITH
YOU.

SMILE

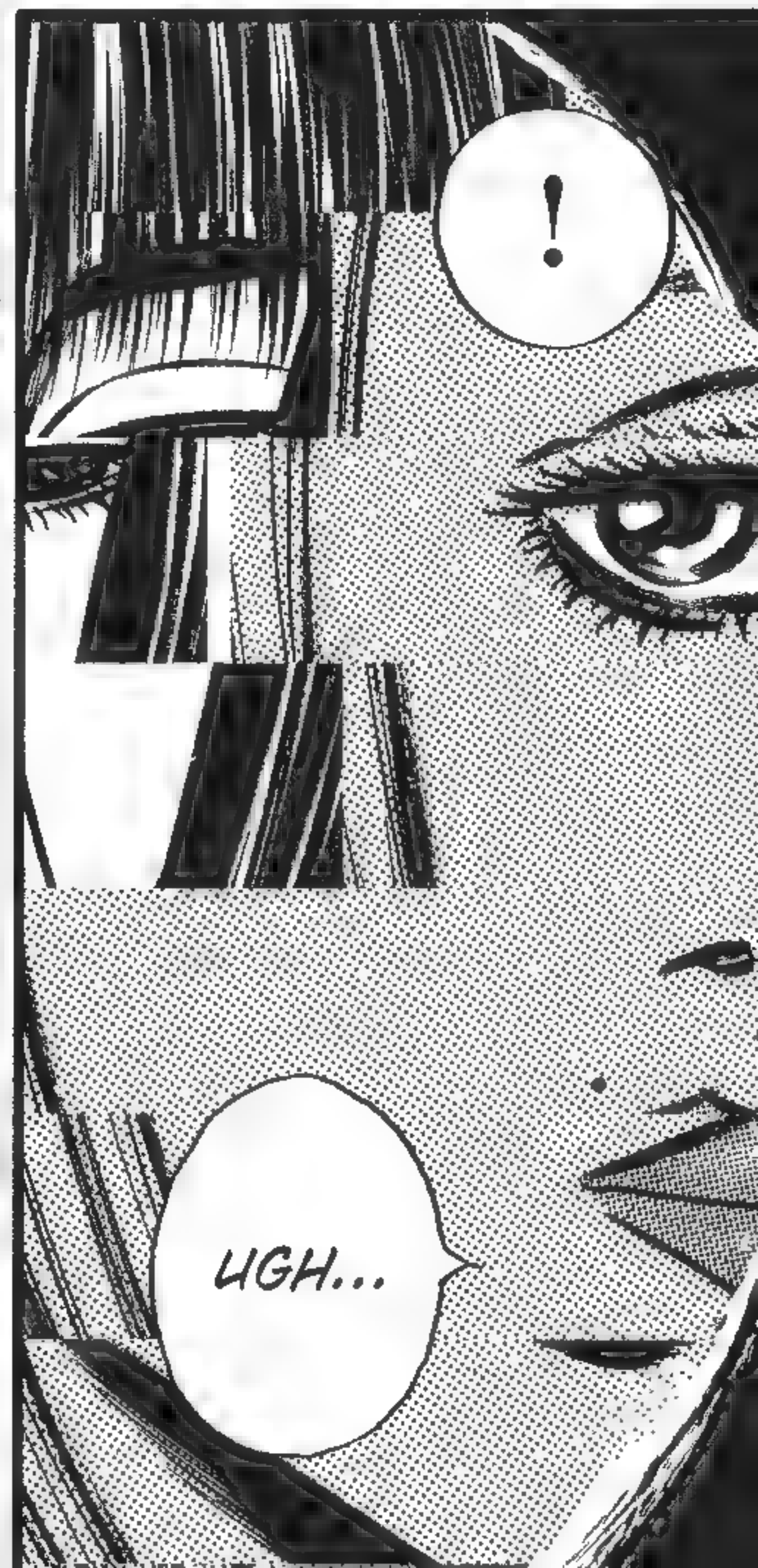


H...

HER FACE
CHANGED
THIS
TIME...



WHAT AN
AWKWARD
THING TO
ASK A
LADY!



!

UGH...



WHICH IS IT, DAMN IT?!



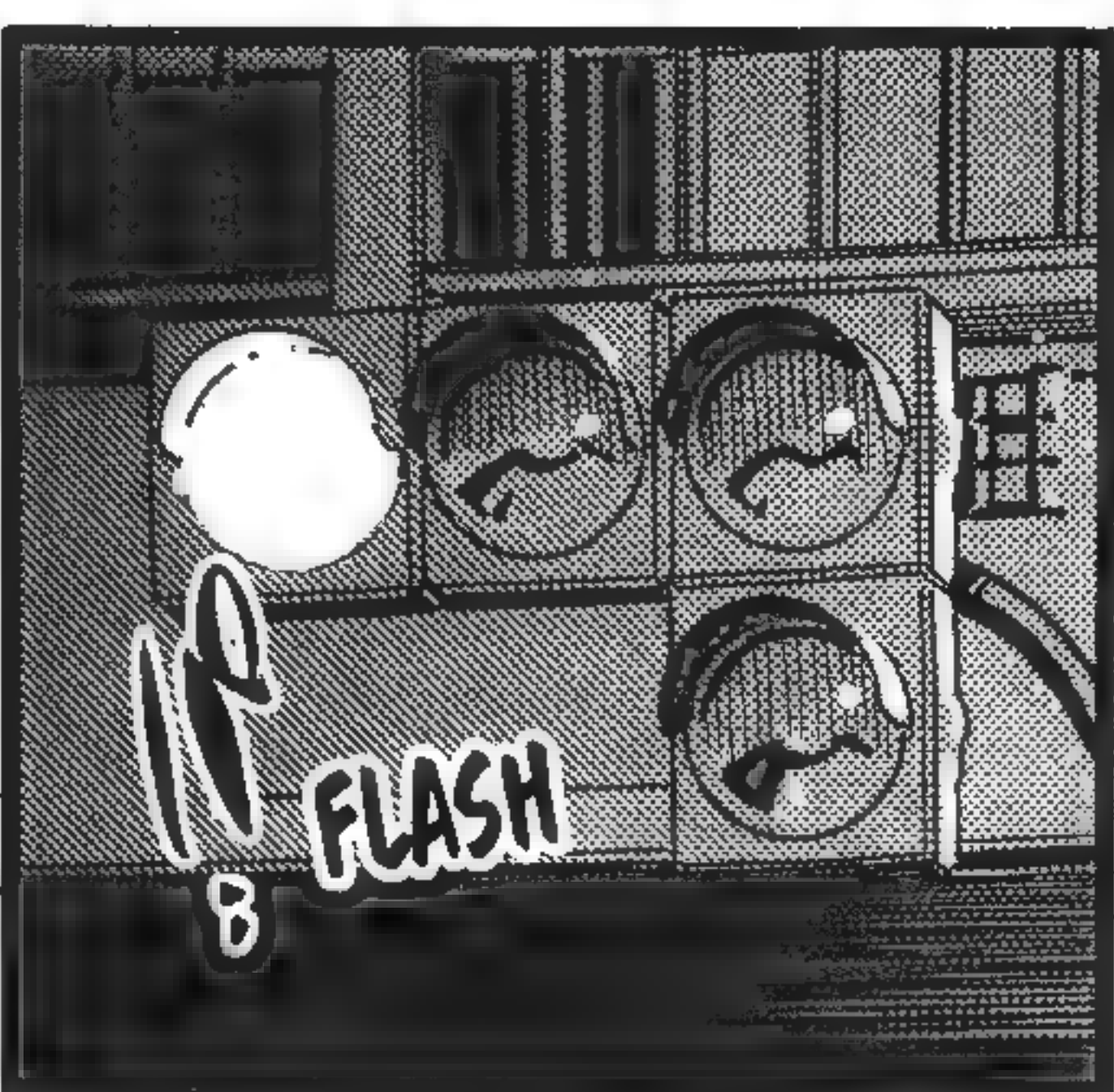
ANOTHER LIE, THEN?



GOD. YOU REALLY PISS ME OFF.



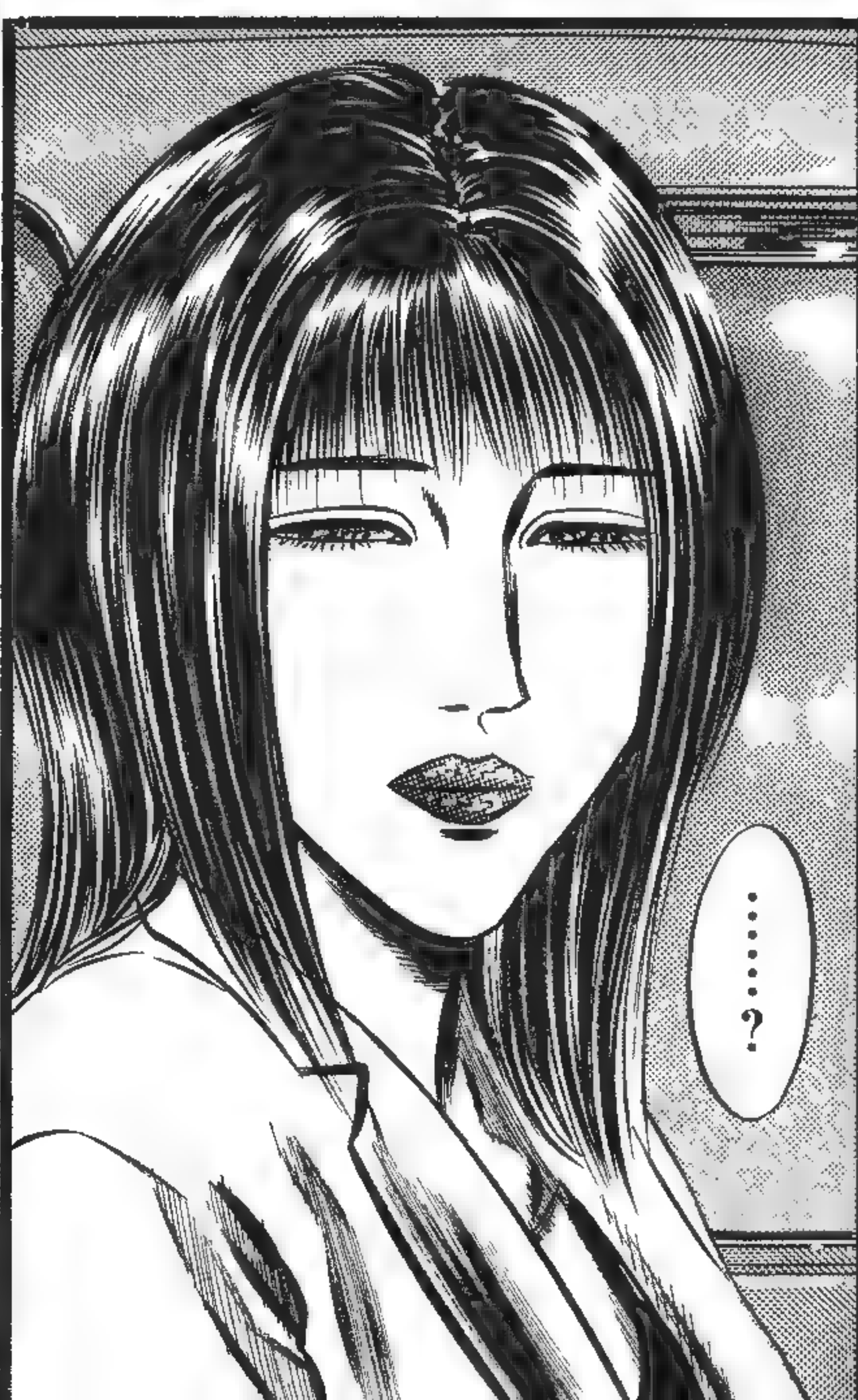
STOMP



FLASH

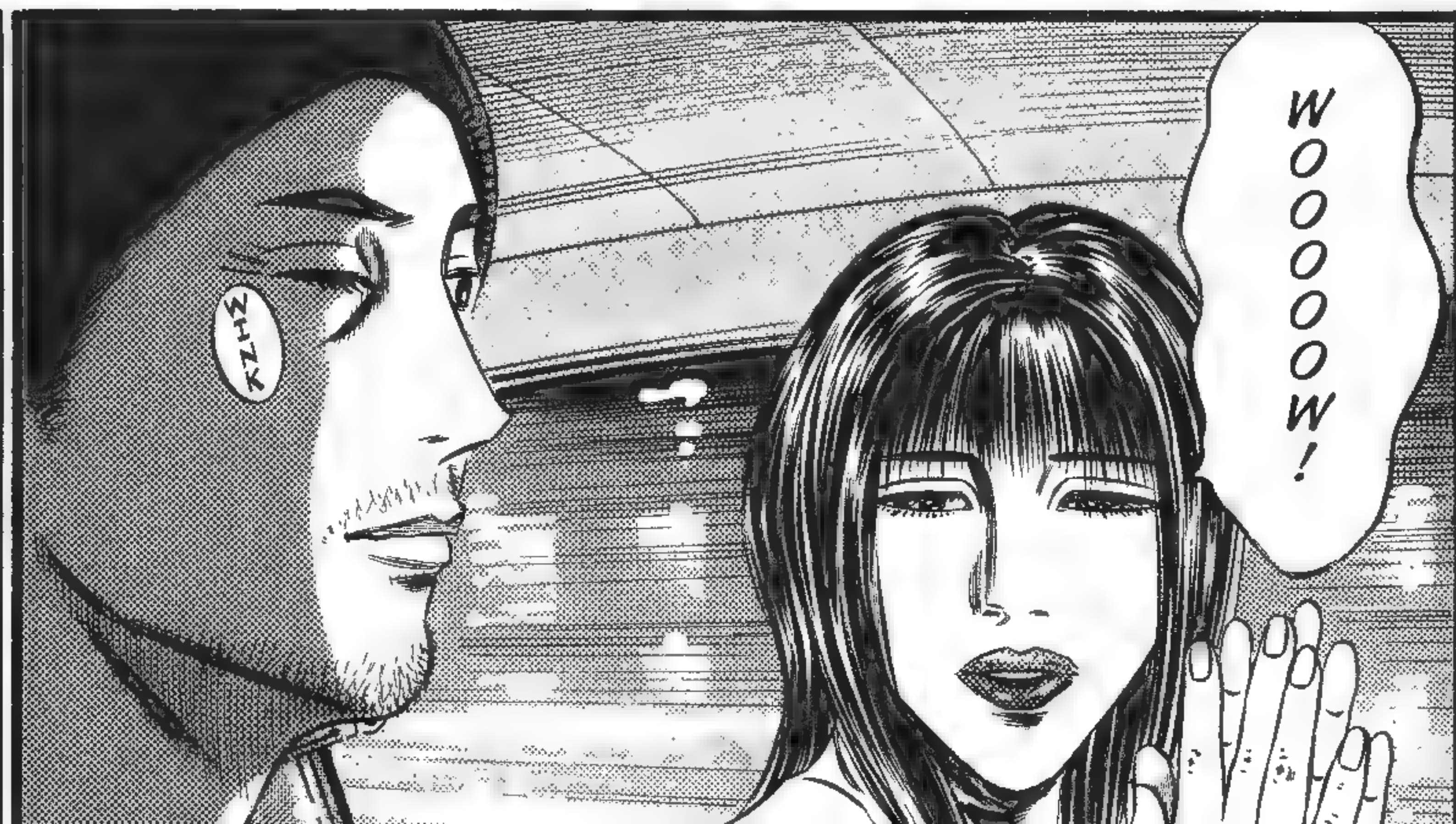
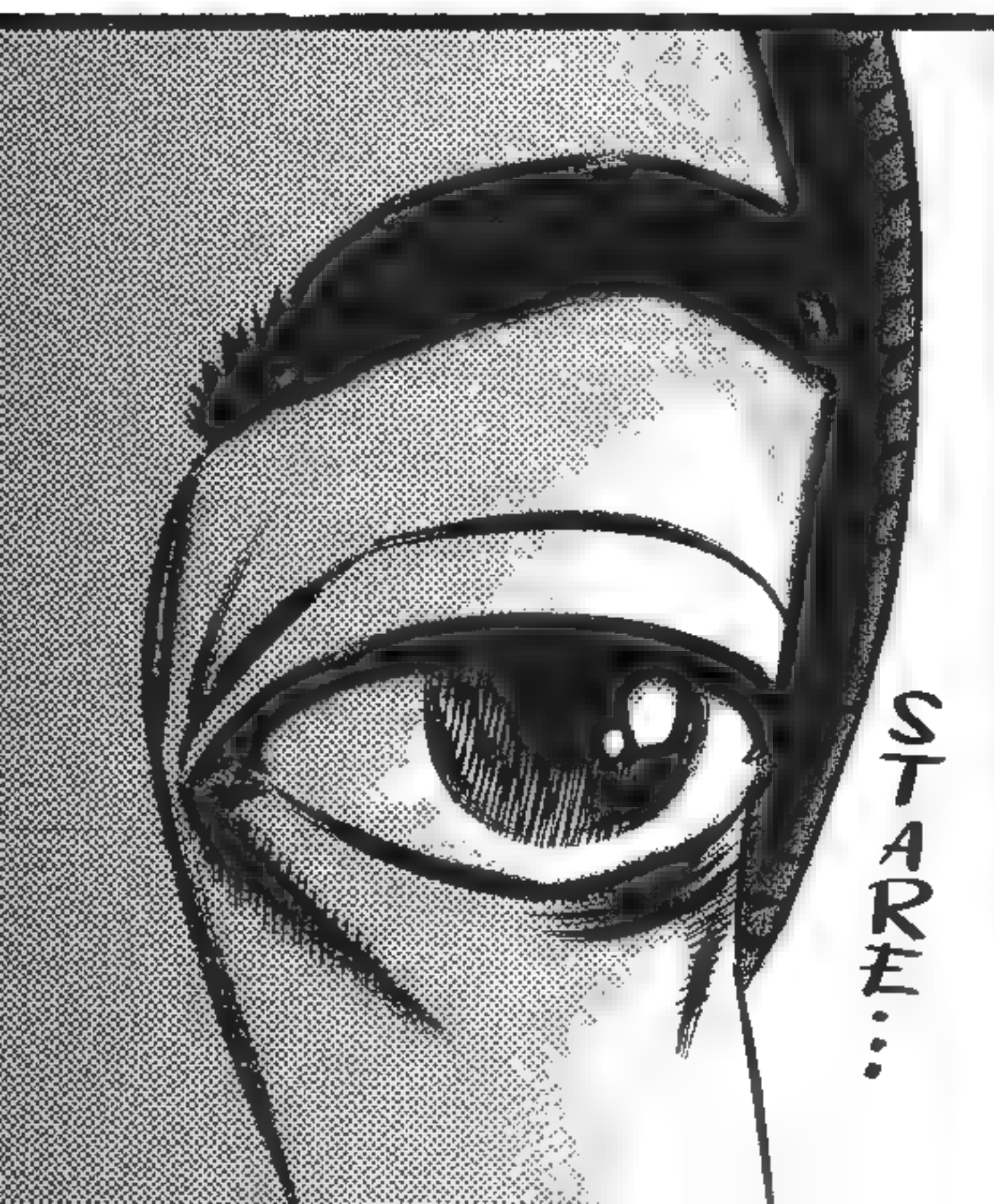


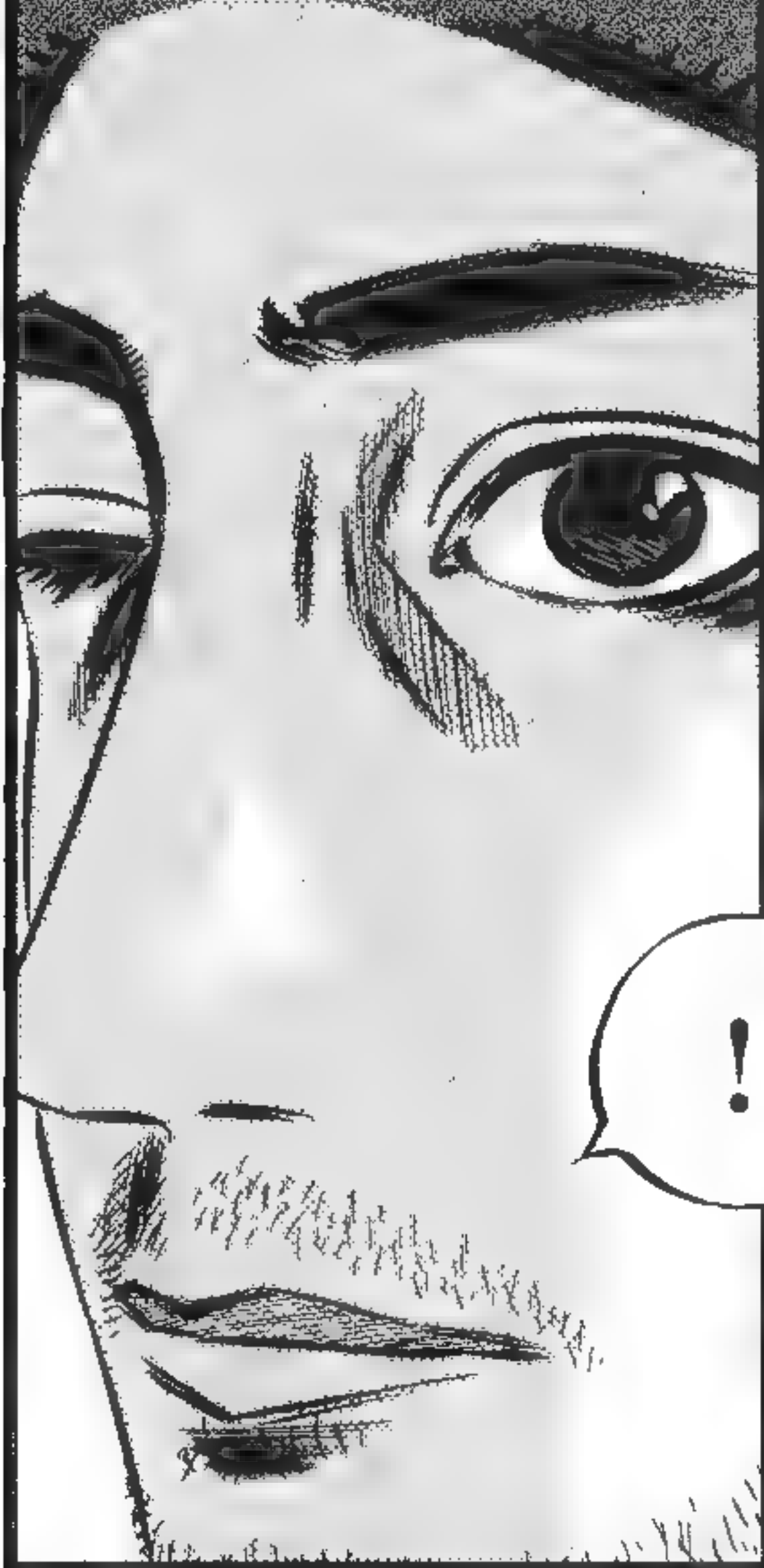
POOR



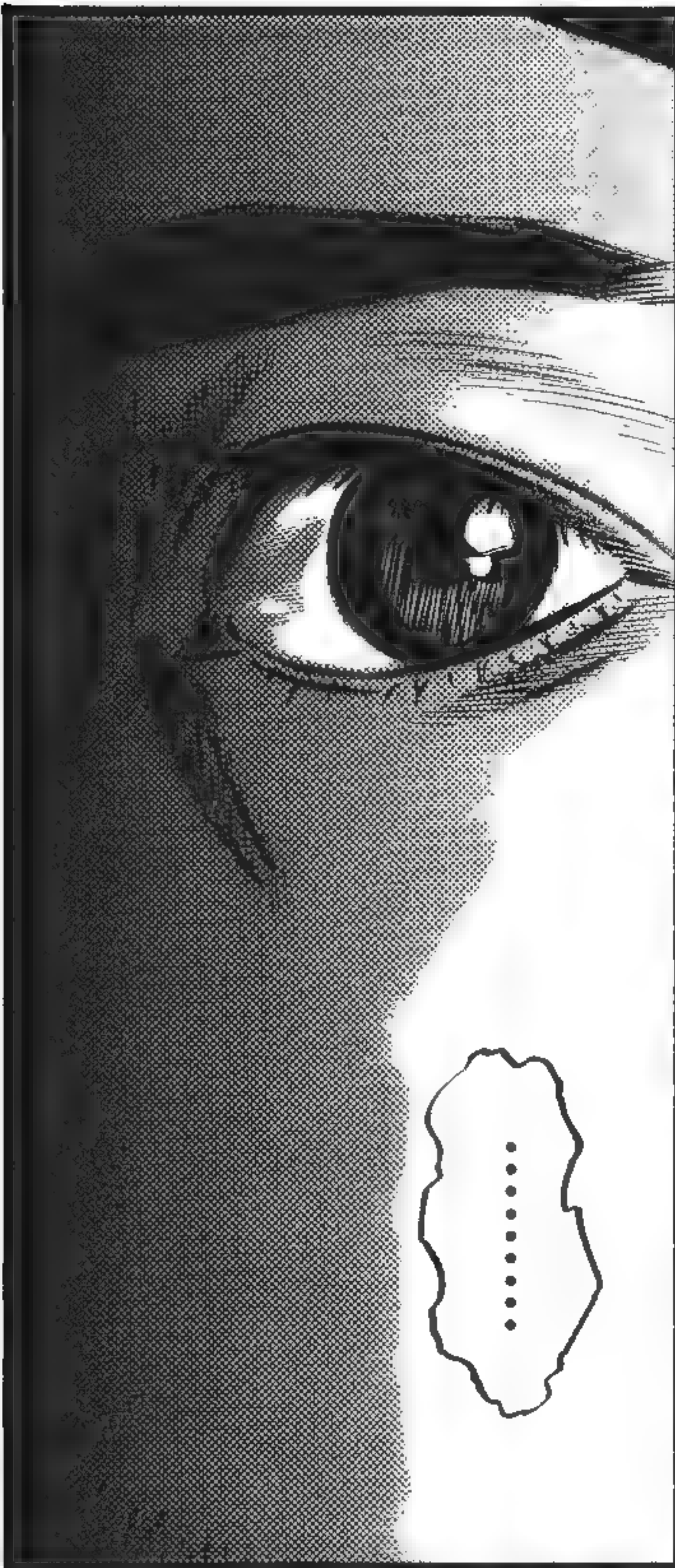
.....
?







!



...



AS
PRODUCTIVE
AS EVER, HM,
NAKOSHI-SAN?



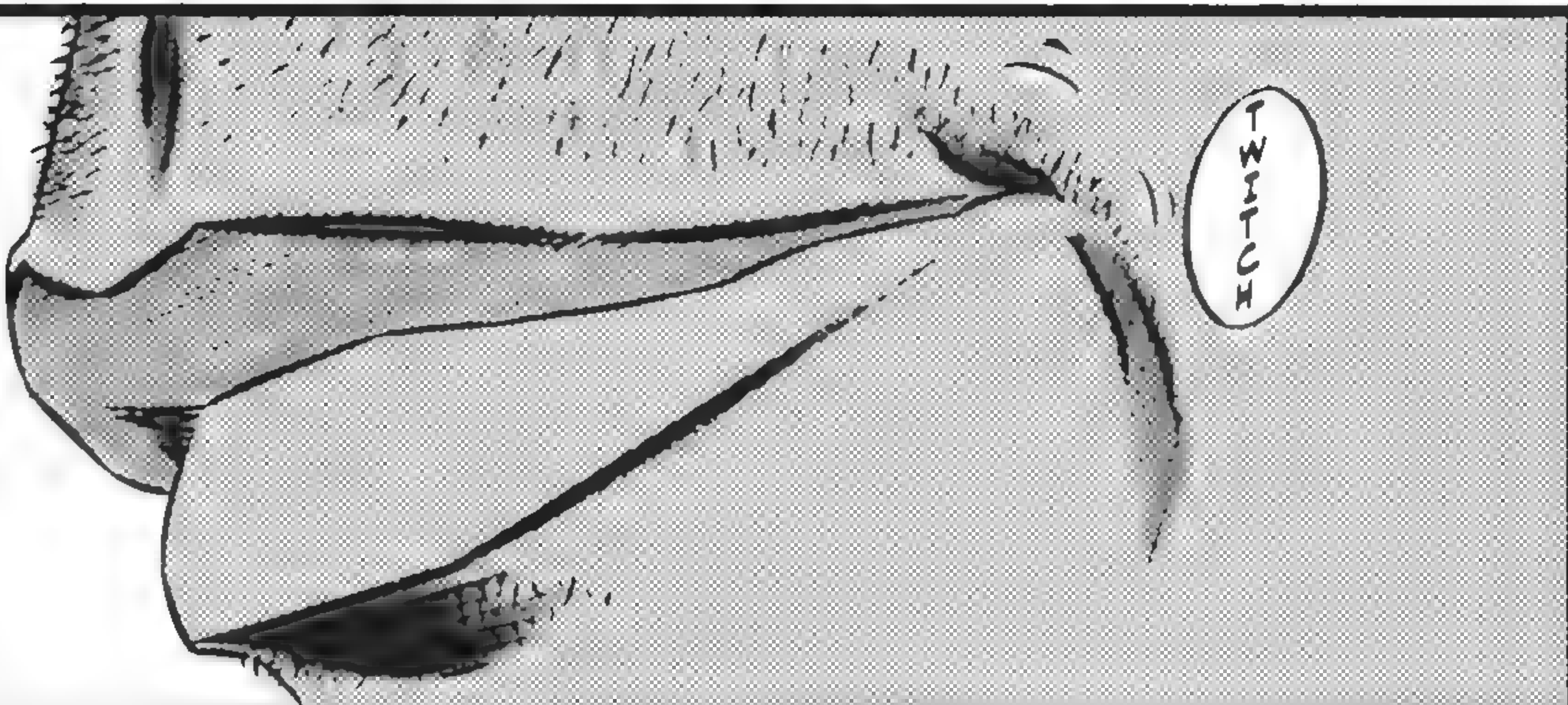
ARE YOU
LIVING OUT
OF YOUR
CAR IN THAT
DINGY LITTLE
CESSPOOL?
HMM?

IF YOU'RE
DOING THAT
WELL, THEN
WHY...

BUT
WAIT!



LIKE I SAID
BEFORE...I'M
JUST DOING A
LITTLE SOUL-
SEARCHING.



THERE'S BEEN
A SURGE OF
HOMELESSNESS
DUE TO ALL THE
RECENT LAYOFFS,
SO I'M HERE TO
RESEARCH HOW BAD
THE PROBLEM IS.



I'M HERE
TO COLLECT
DATA FOR A
CONSULTATION
GIG WITH
THAT HOTEL.



IT'S TO REMIND
MYSELF OF THE
HUNGER I ONCE
HAD. AND LIVING
LIKE A VAGABOND
IS SO RUGGED AND
BOHEMIAN, Y'KNOW?







I
SC...
SCR...

SCREWED
UP...

A...

AT WORK.
R...REAL...
BAD.



M-MY BOSS
THUH...TH-THREW
ME OUT. BULLIED ME
INTO QU-QUITTING.
ON PAPER, I
"RESIGNED,"
BUT...

I-IT WAS
REALLY
MORE
THAT I
WAS...F-
F-FIRED.



FELL INTO
DEBT.

LOST MY
SAVINGS,
STOCKS,
AND INVEST-
MENTS TOO.
EVERYTHING.



MY
PORSCHÉ,
OBVIOUSLY...

THEY TOOK
IT ALL. MY
APARTMENT...



AND
THIS ONE
SUIT.



ALL I
HAVE LEFT
NOW IS THIS
OLD MAZDA
CAROL...



.....
!



HA!



BUT YOU JUST
SAID YOU WERE
DOING GREAT
AND THAT YOUR
PORSHE WAS
IN A GARAGE IN
HIROO.



I WAS
LYING,
SHERLOCK.





THIS
IS THE
PLACE.



SURE.



THANK
YOU FOR
THE RIDE.



.....

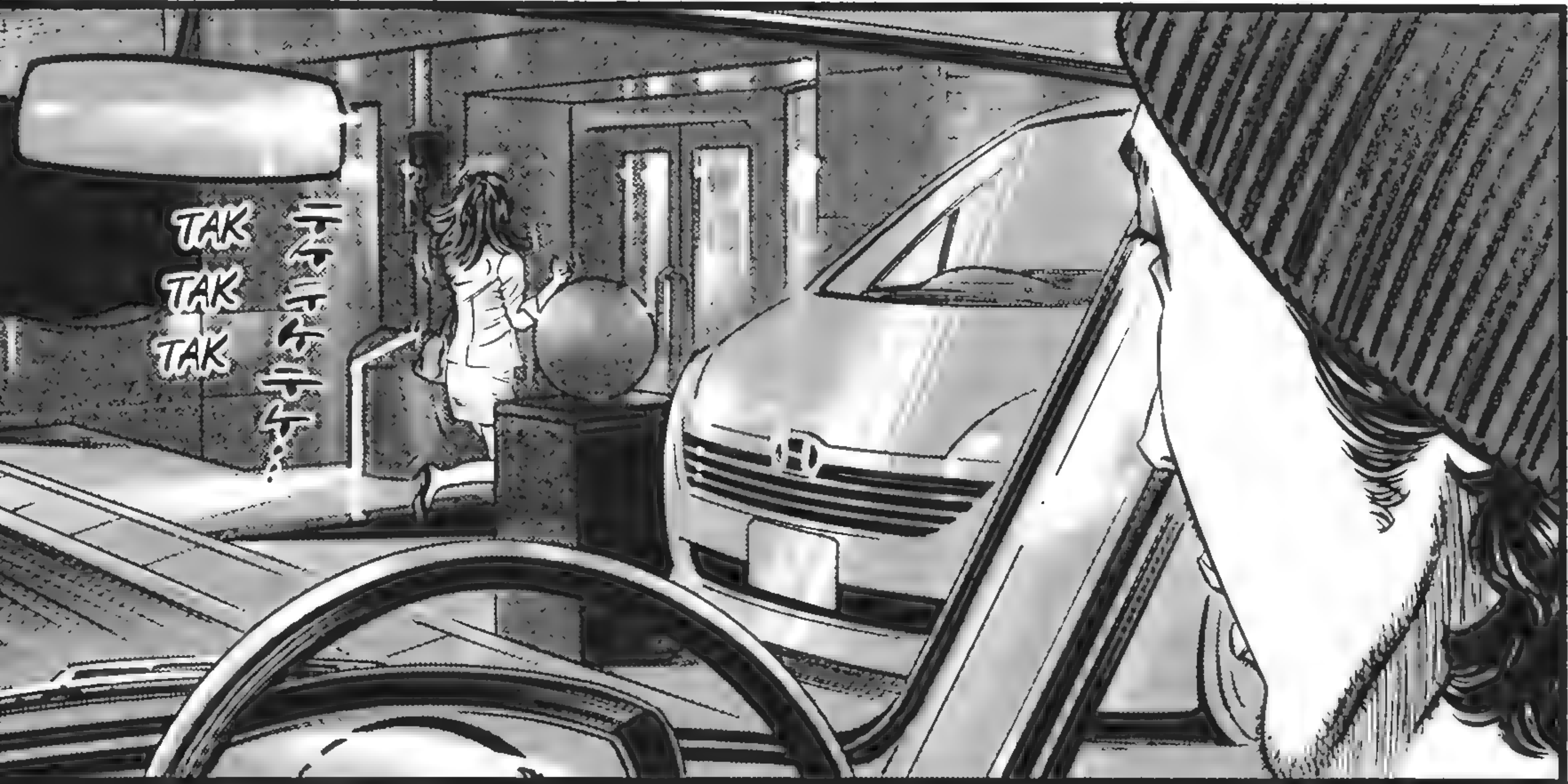


HEE
HEE...



FANCY
PLACE YOU'VE
GOT. BUT IT'S
REALLY JUST
ANOTHER...

EMPTY
SHAM.

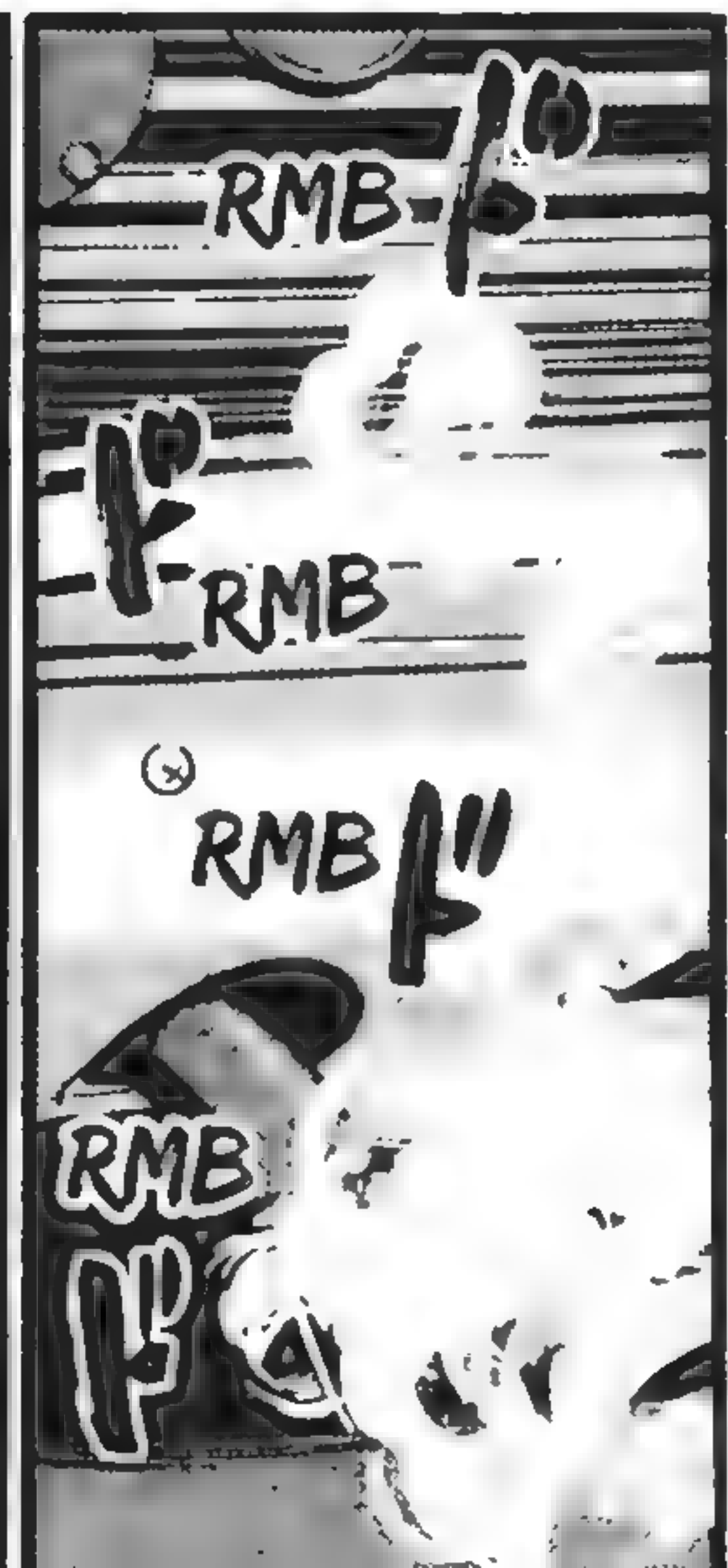


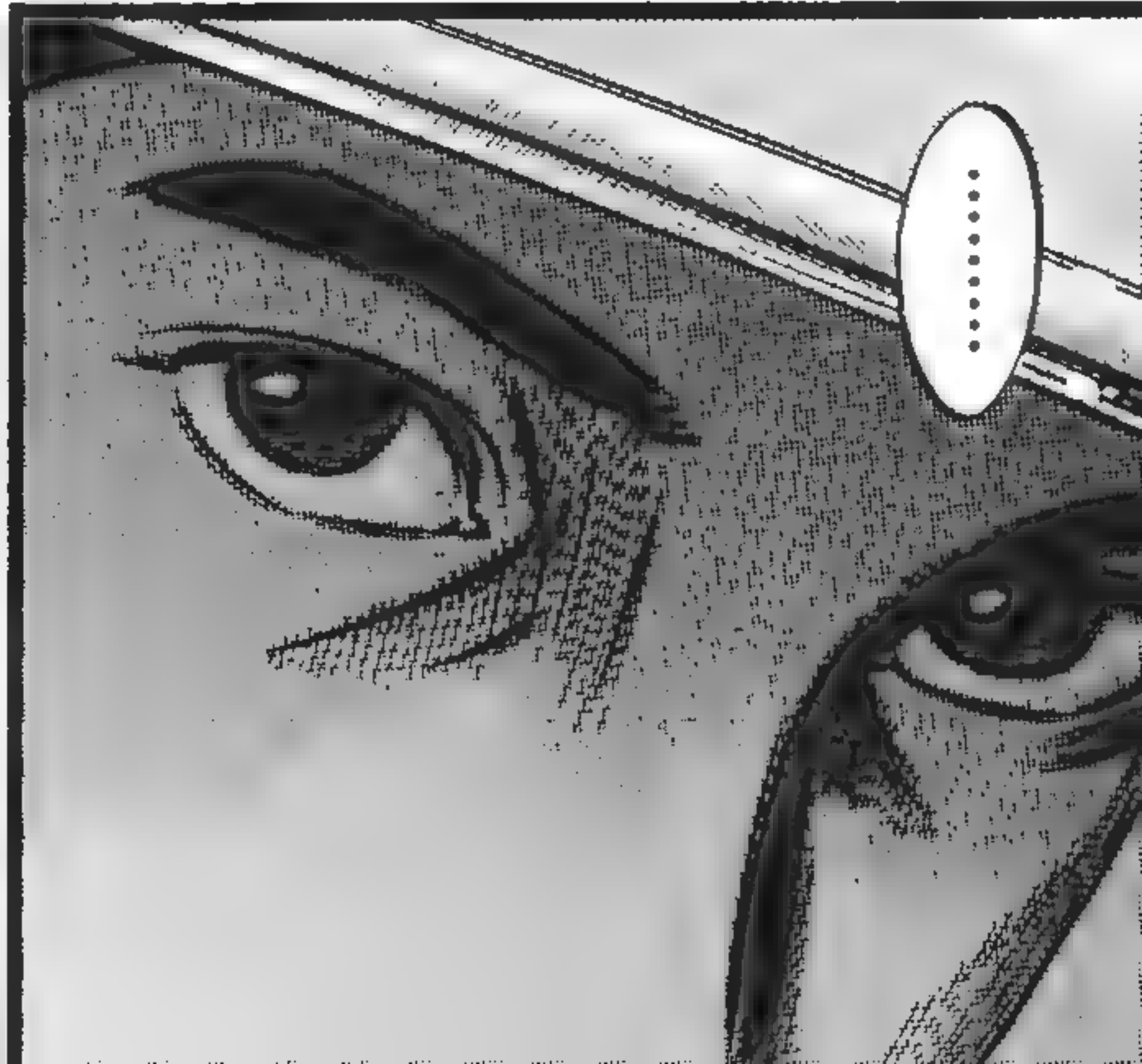
SHE'S
JUST
ANOTHER
CHEAP,
LYING
SACK OF
SHIT.

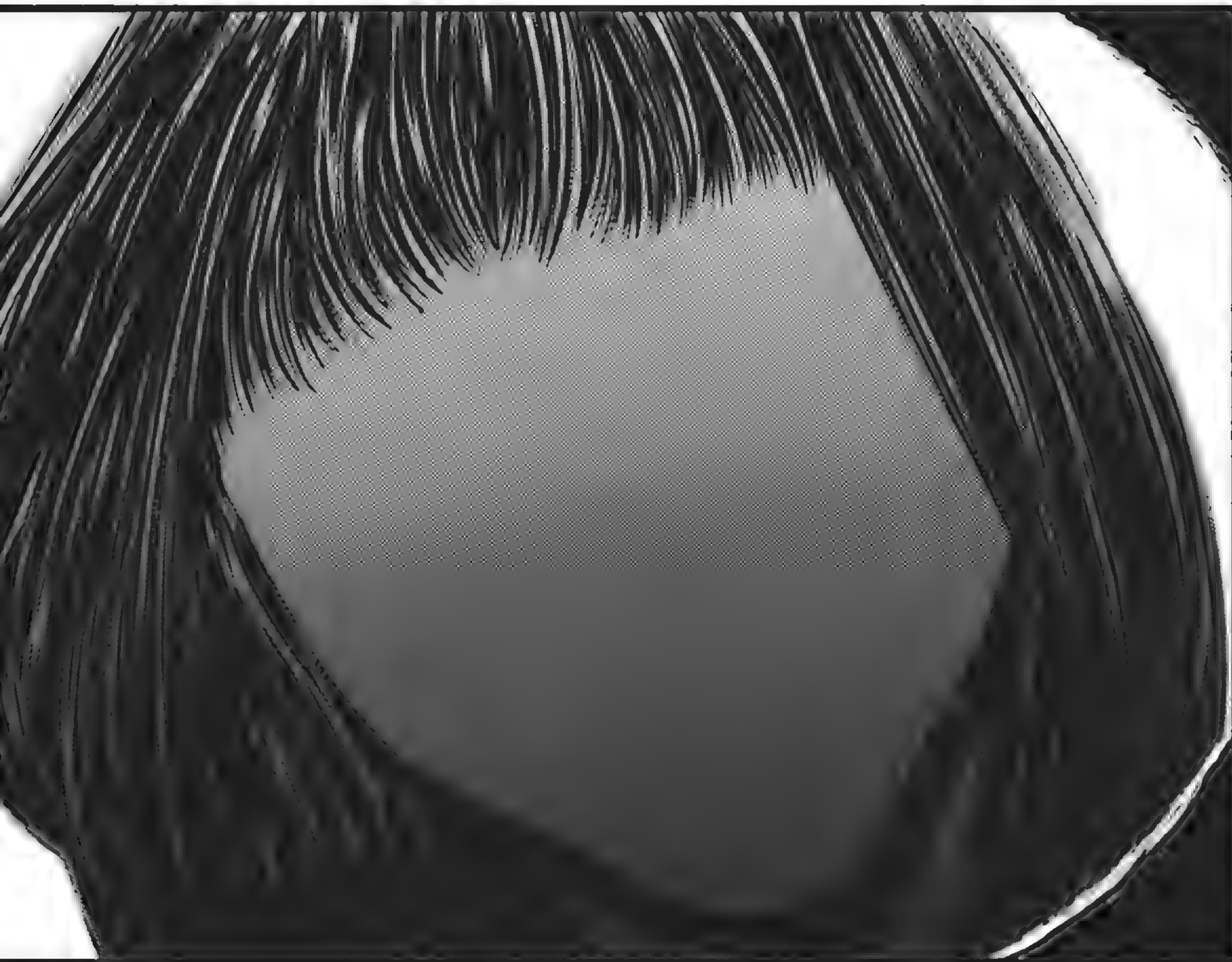


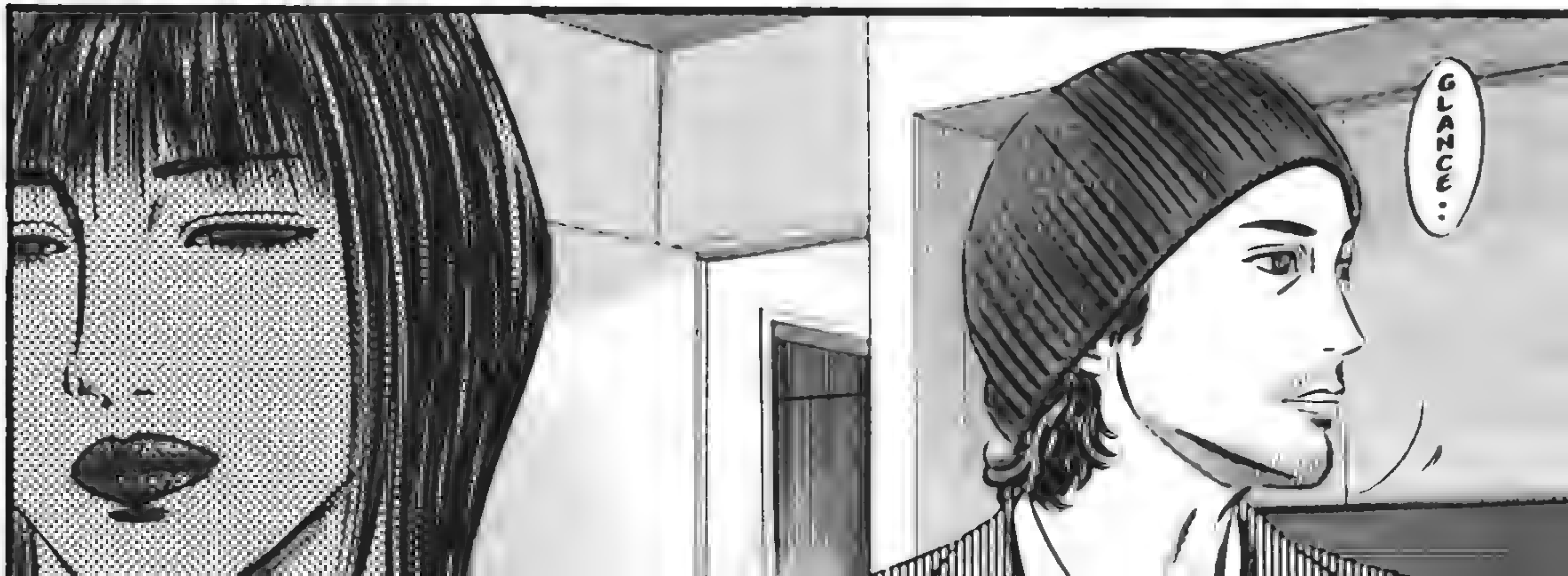
WHO AM I
KIDDING?

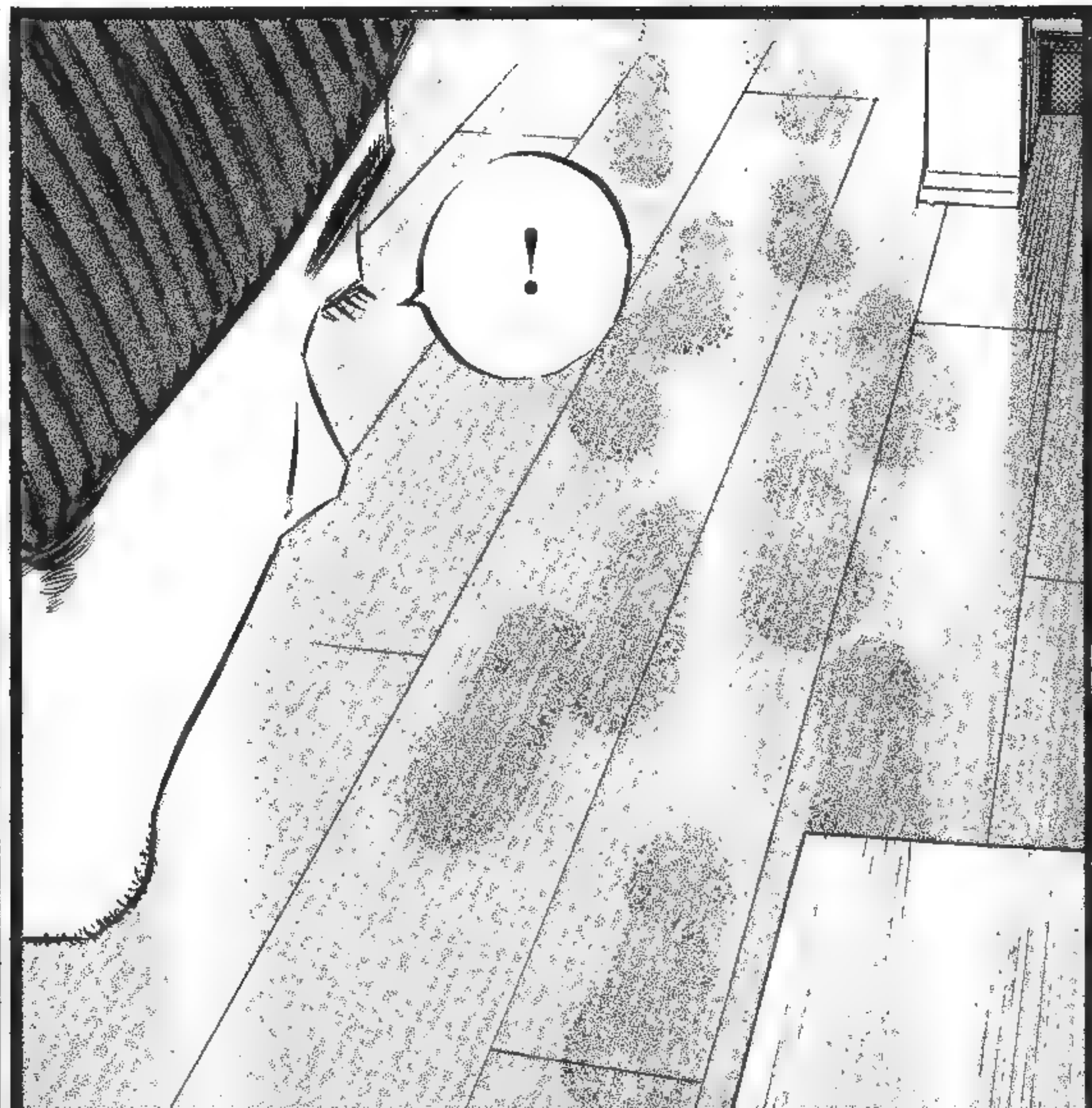
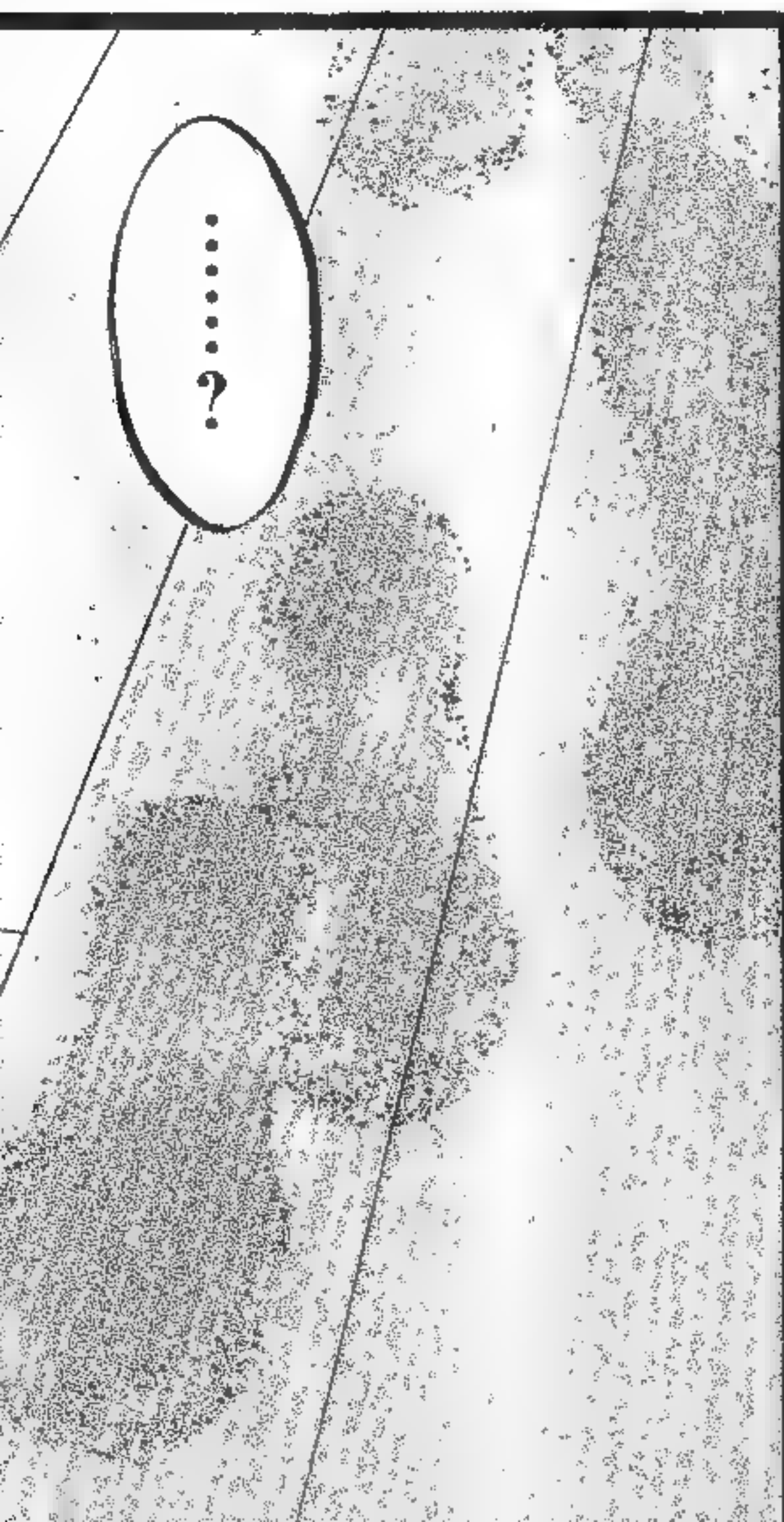
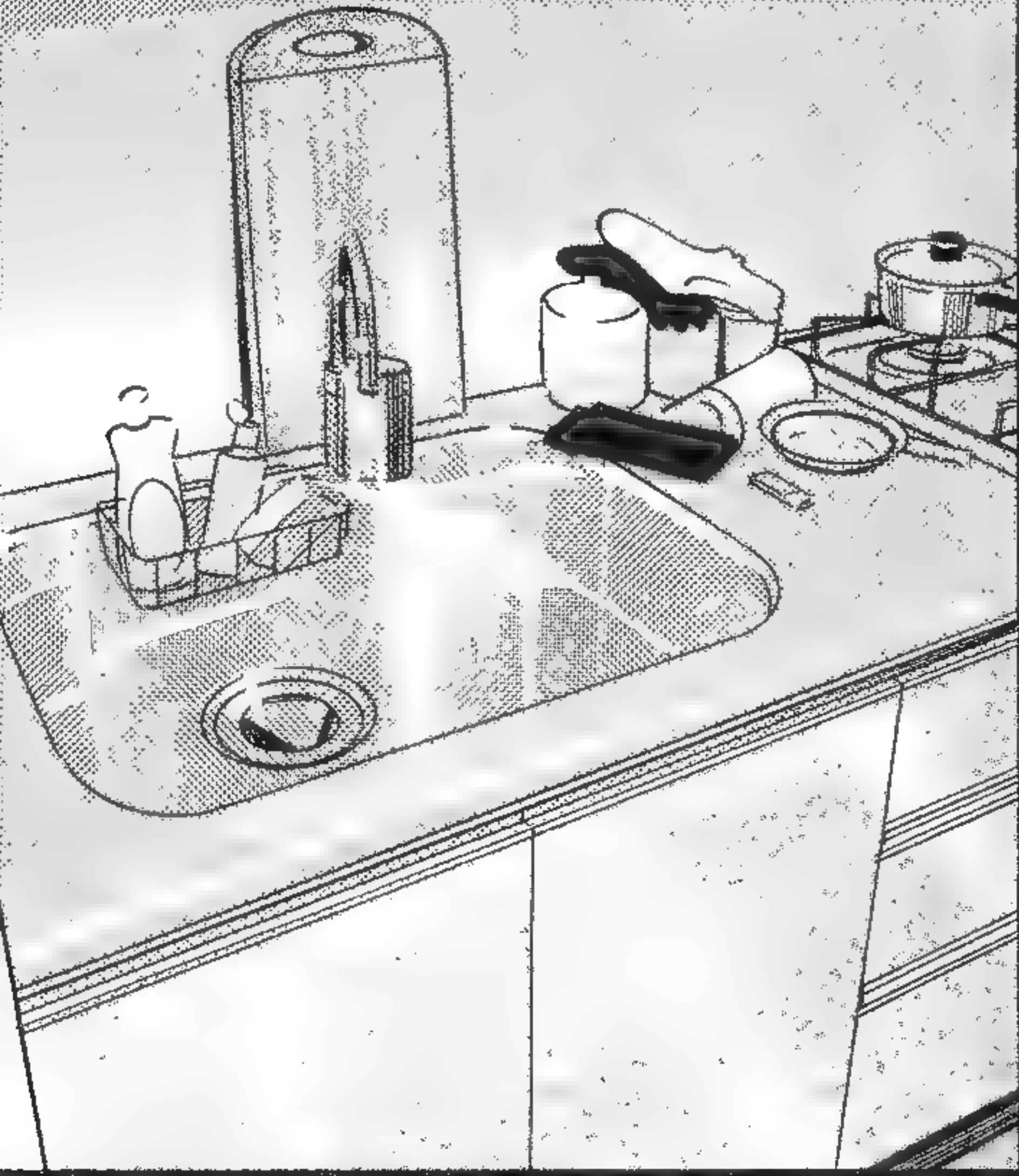
I KNEW
THERE WAS
NOTHING TO
HER FROM
THE START.

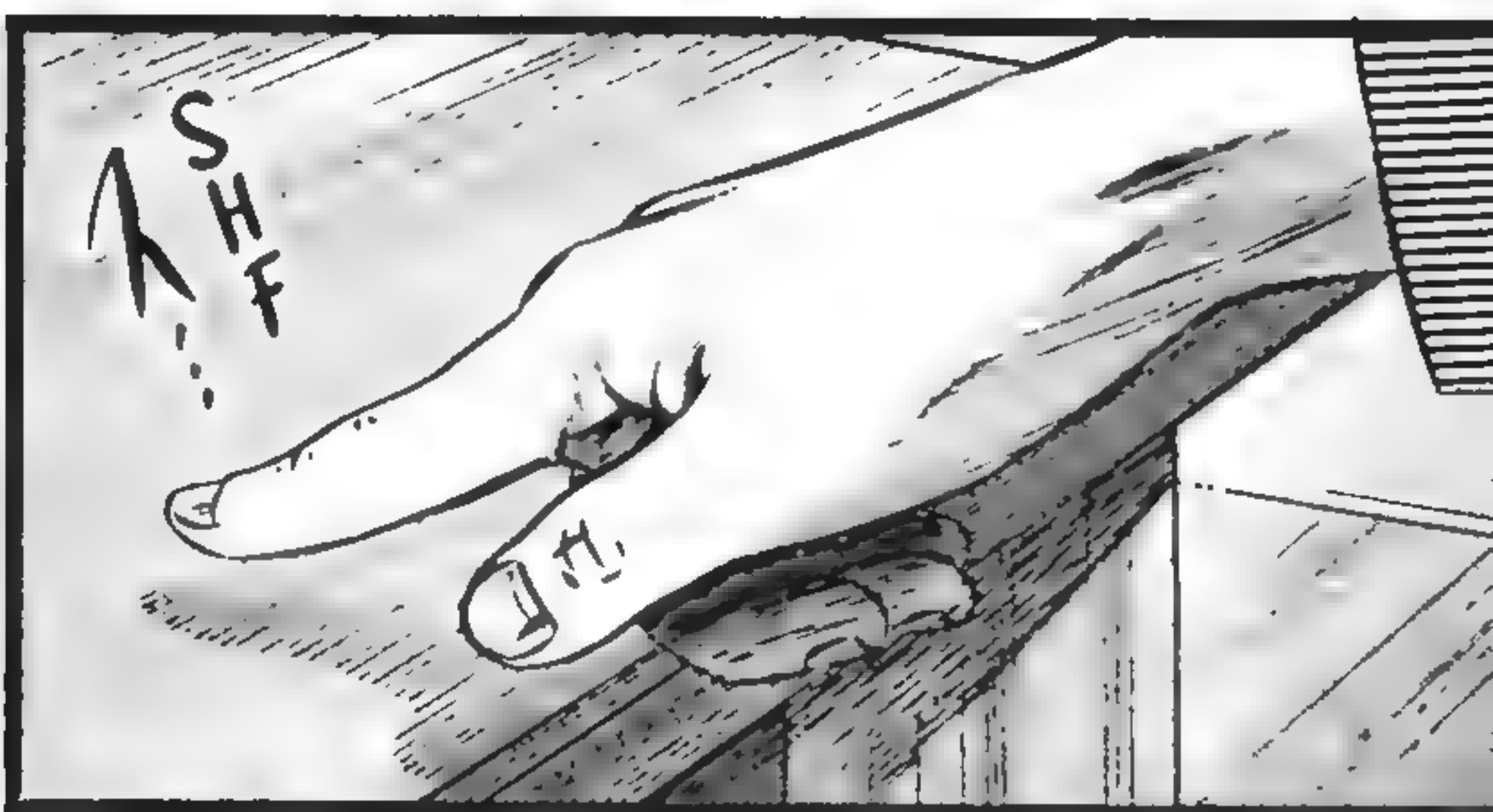
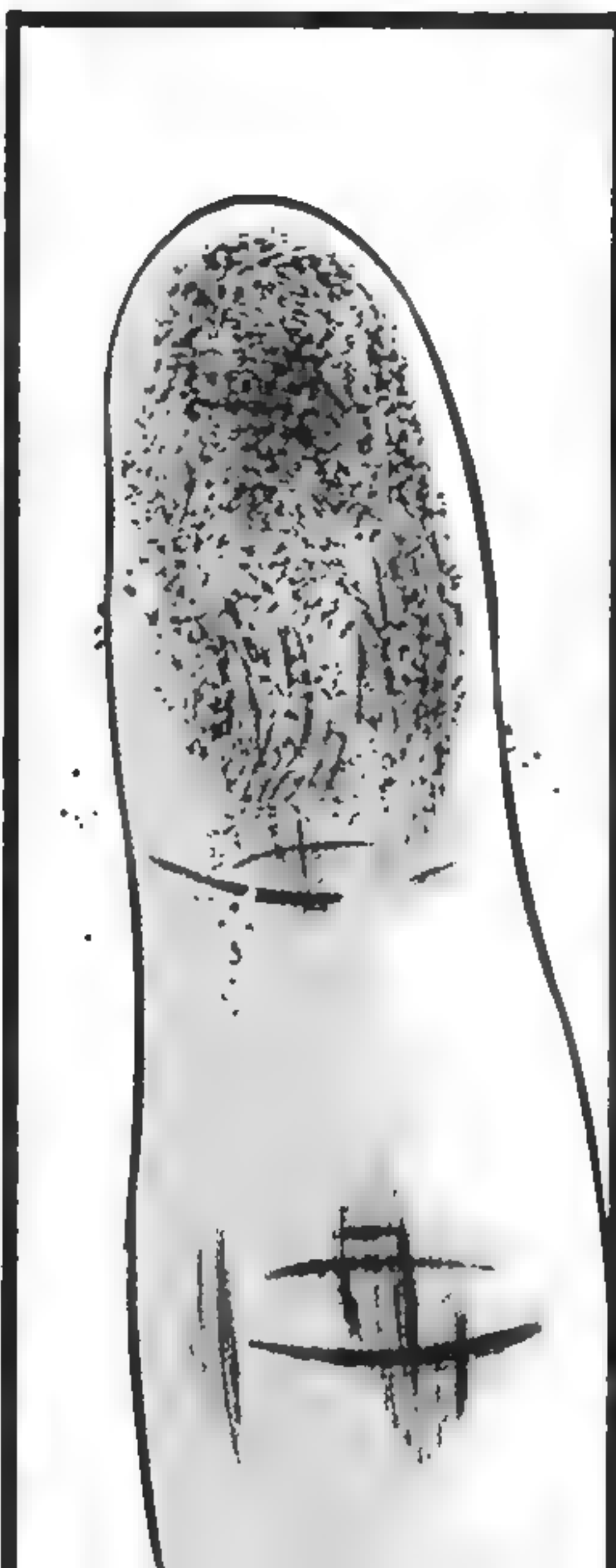
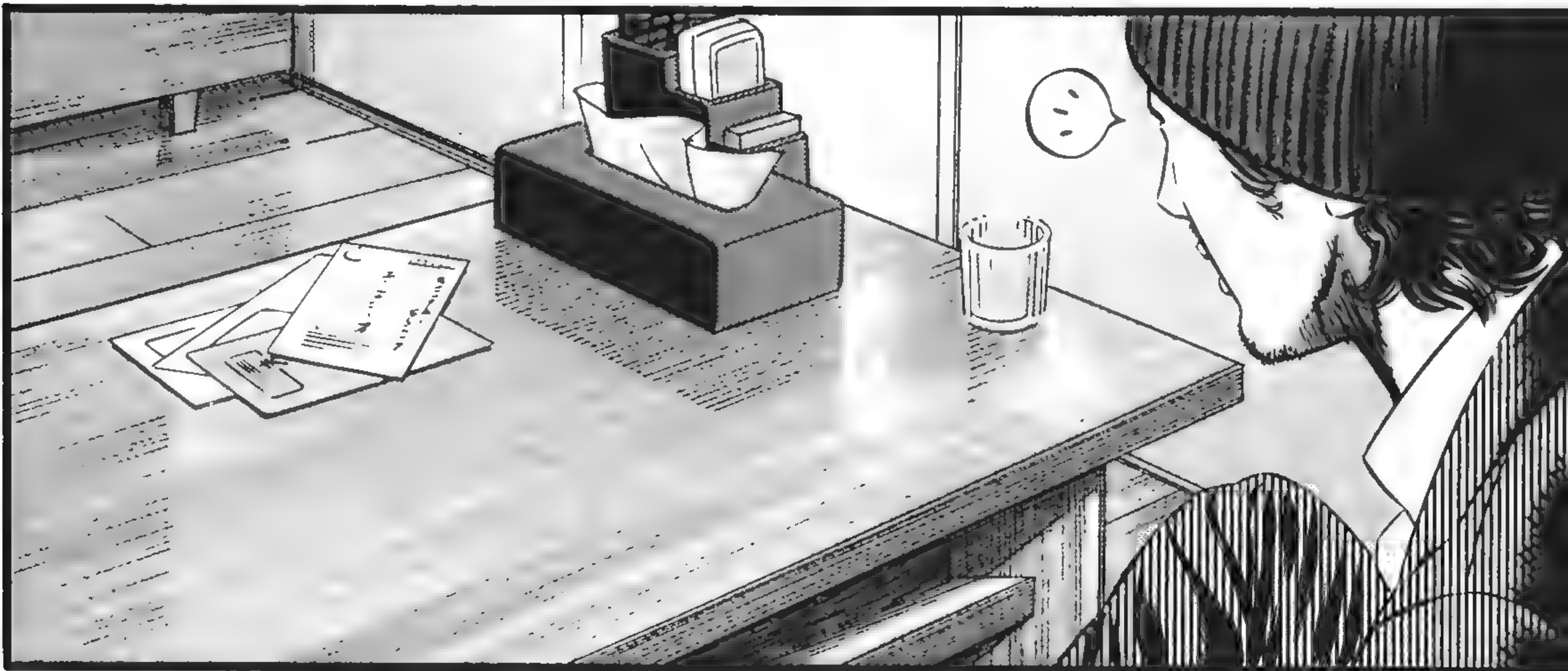
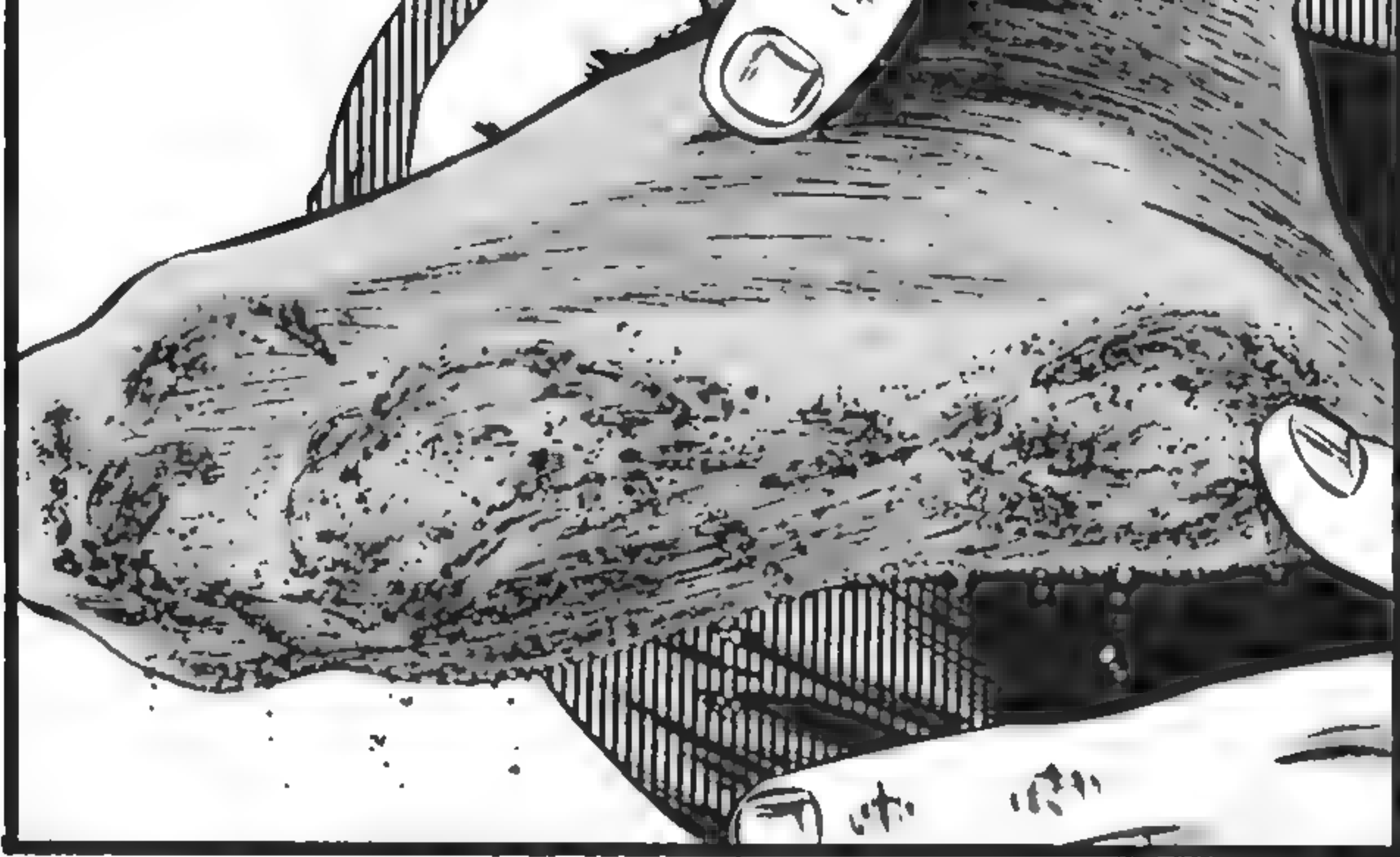


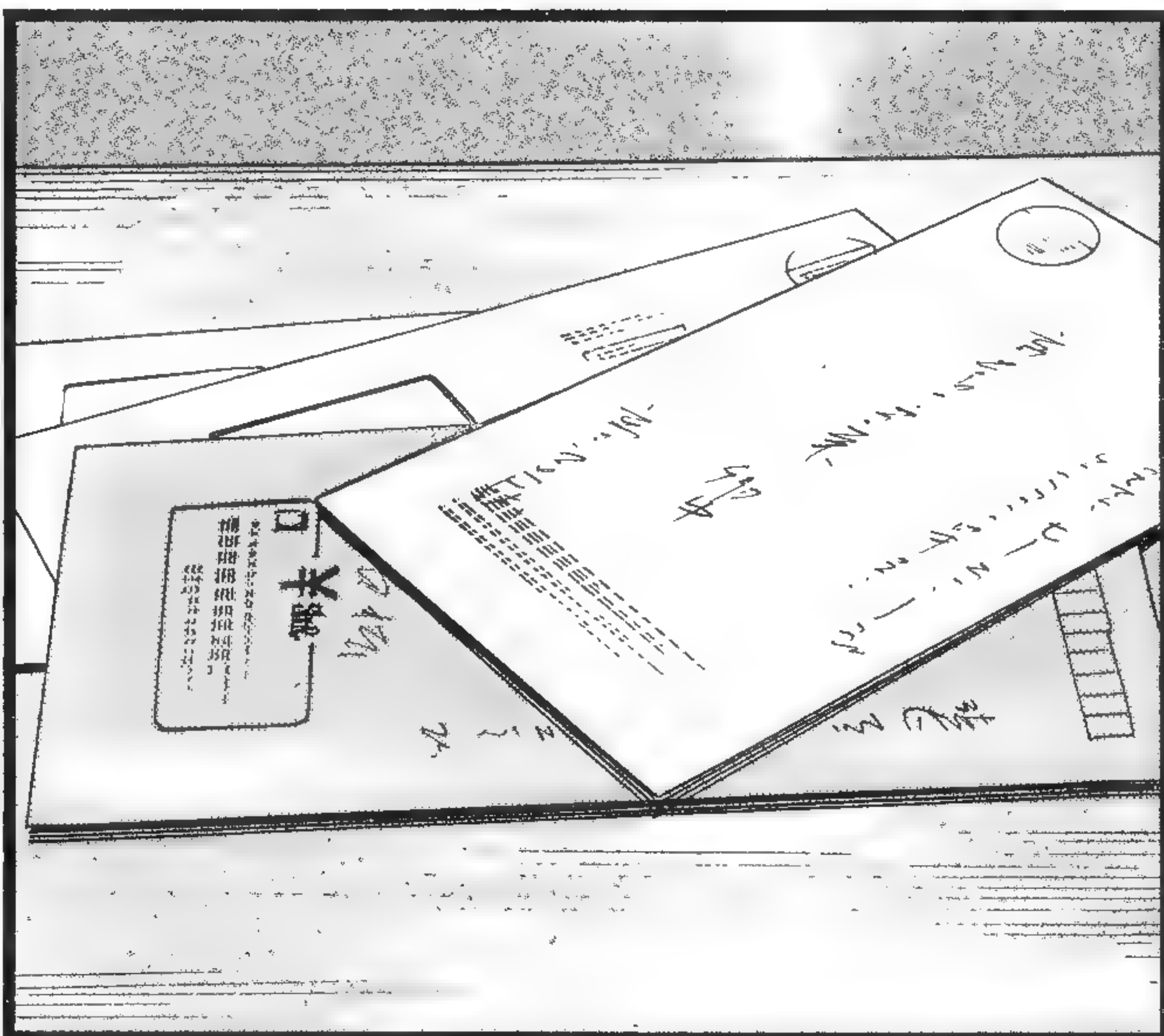
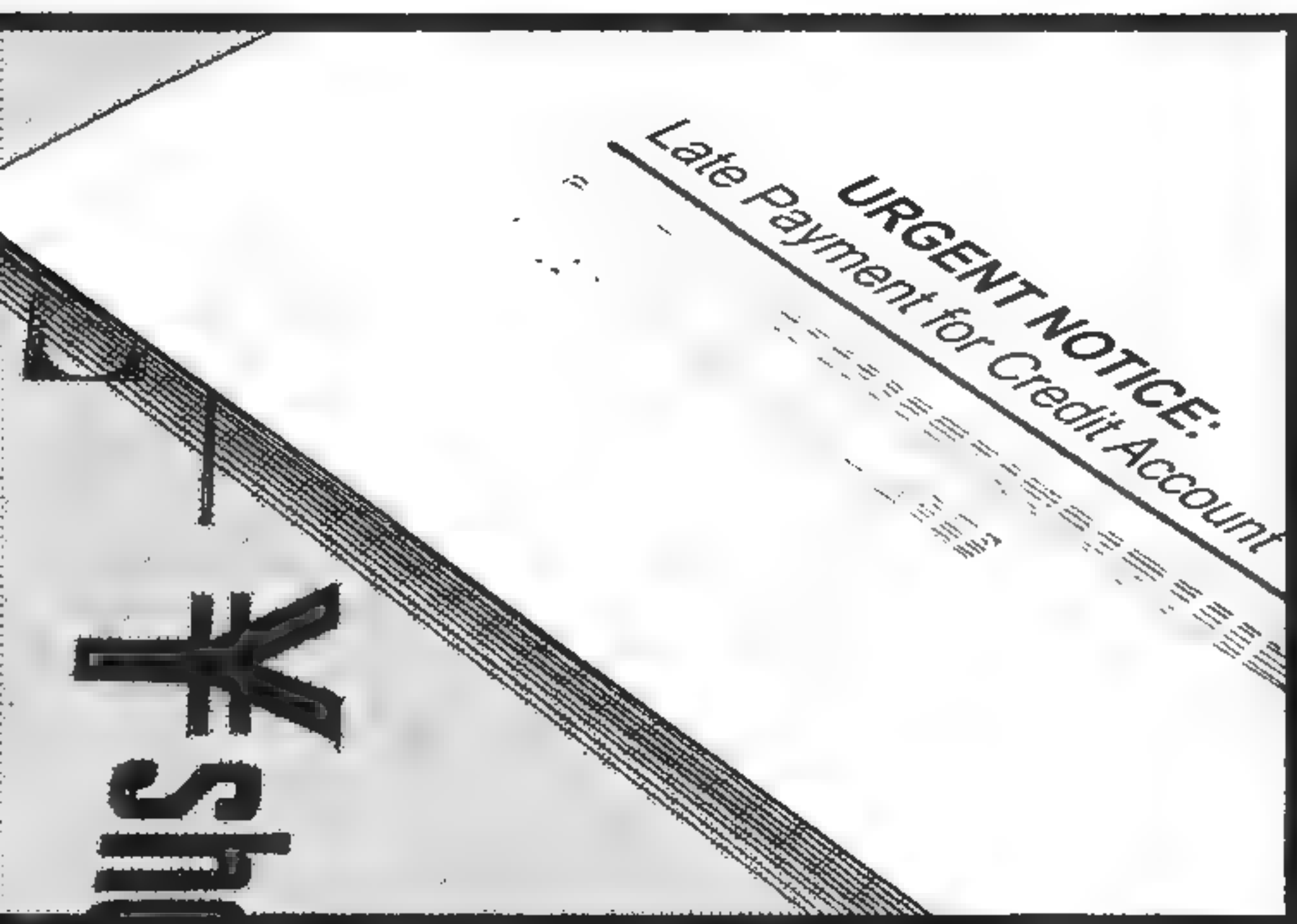


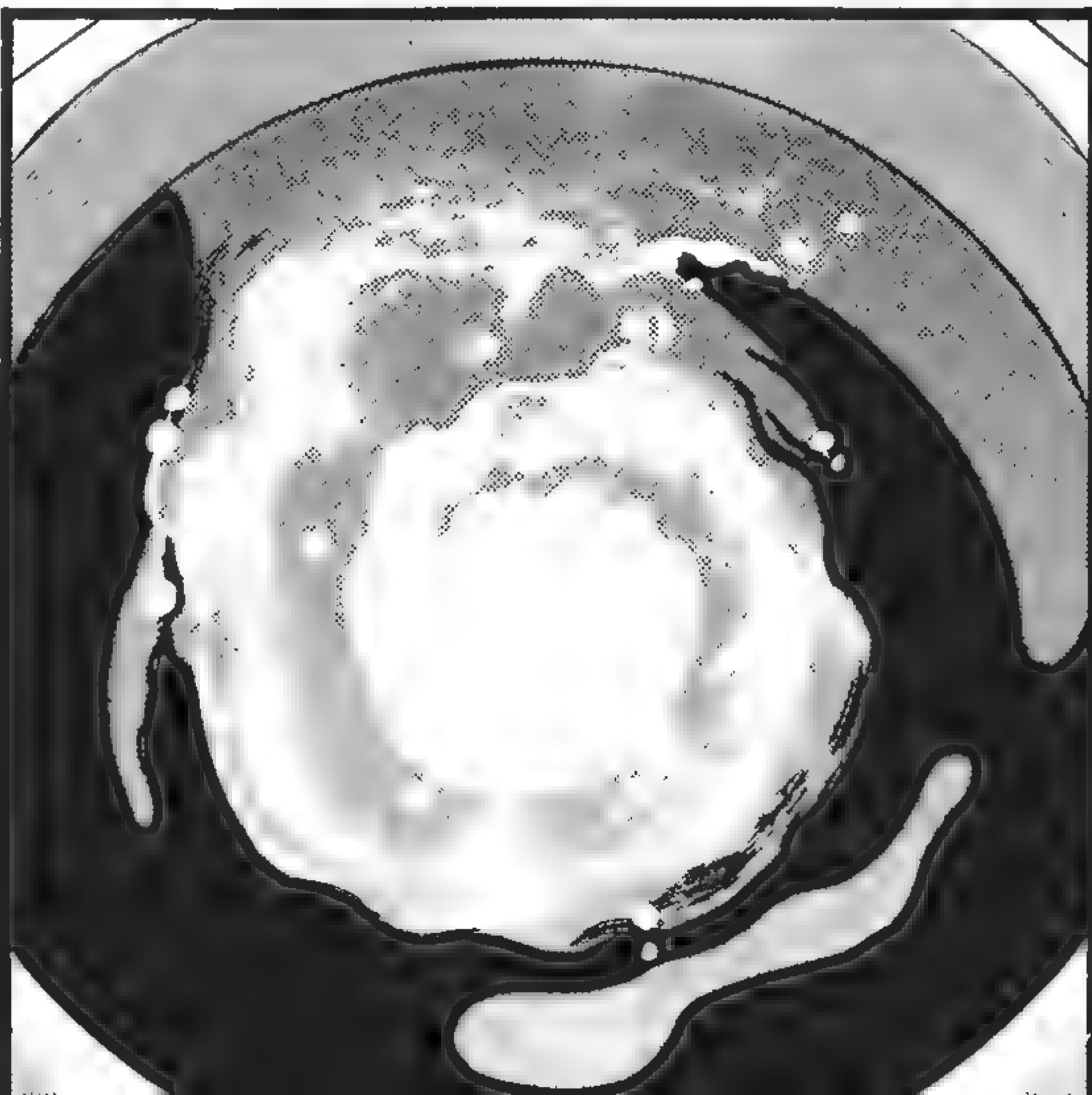
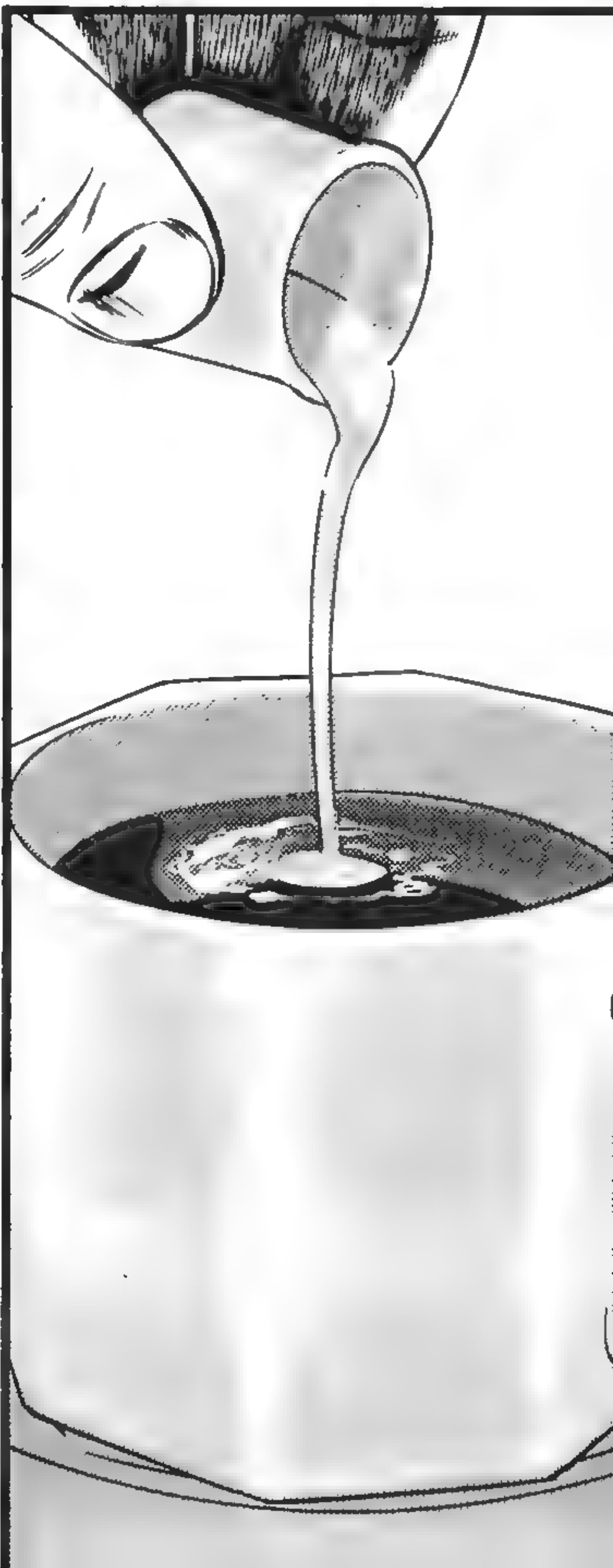
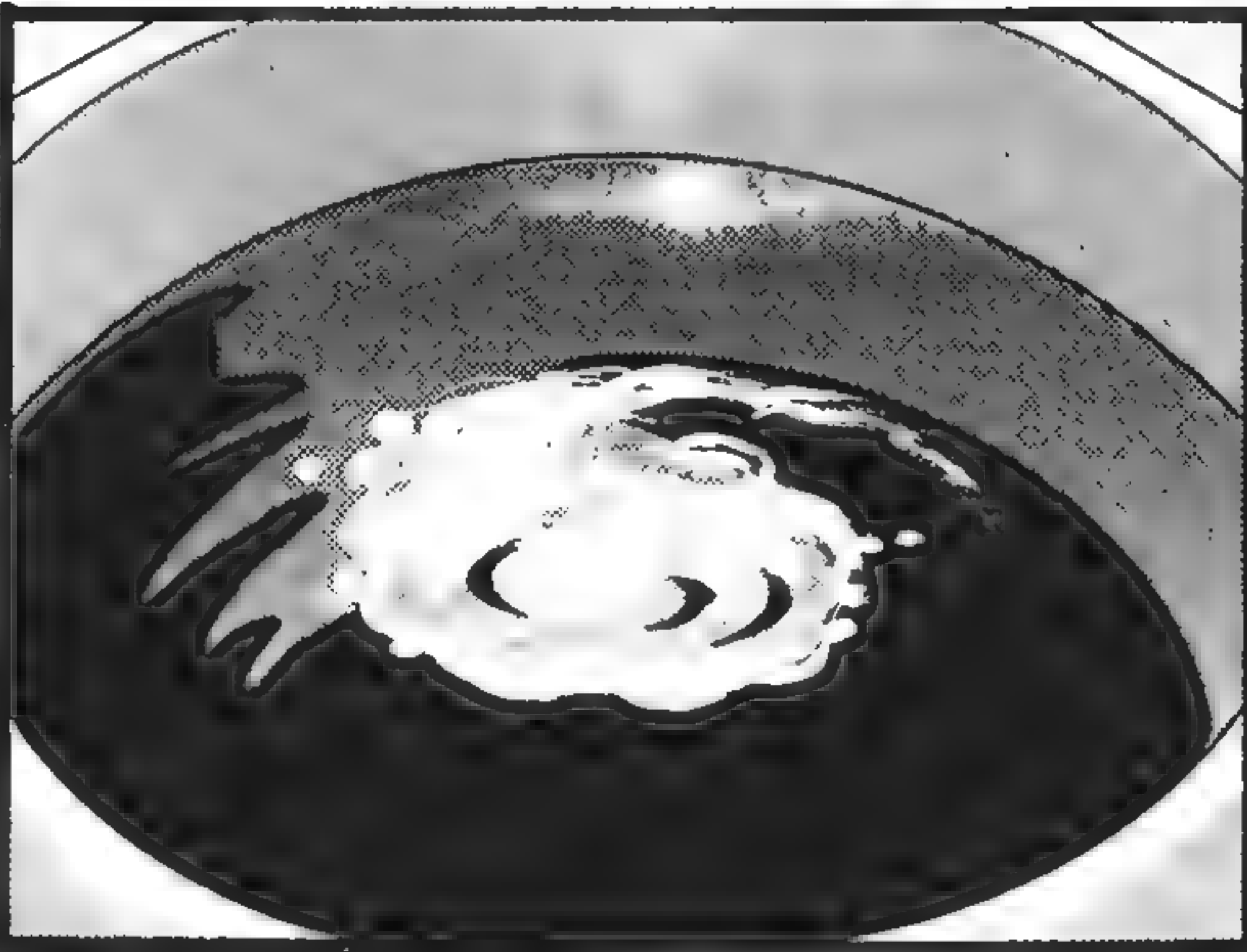


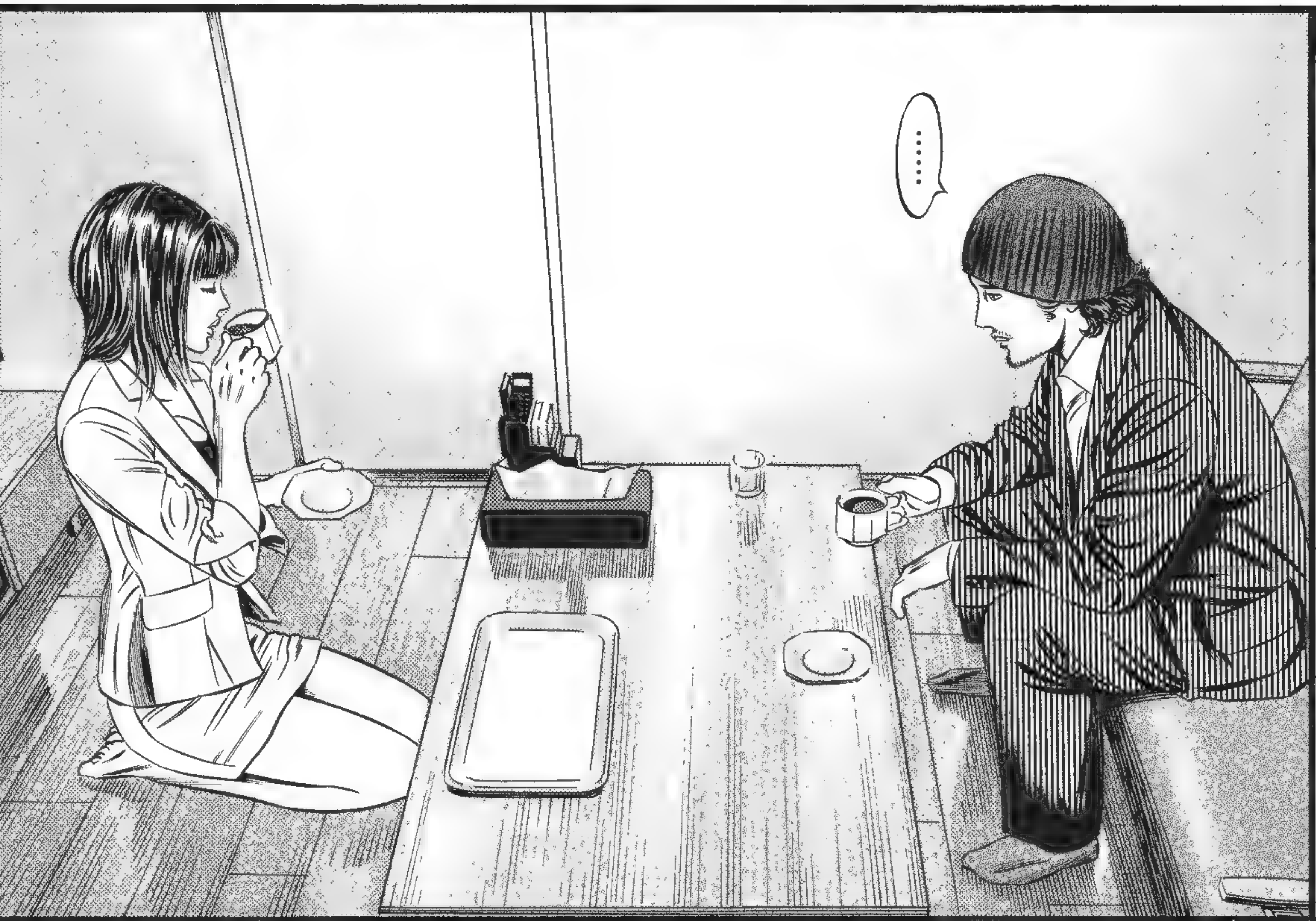


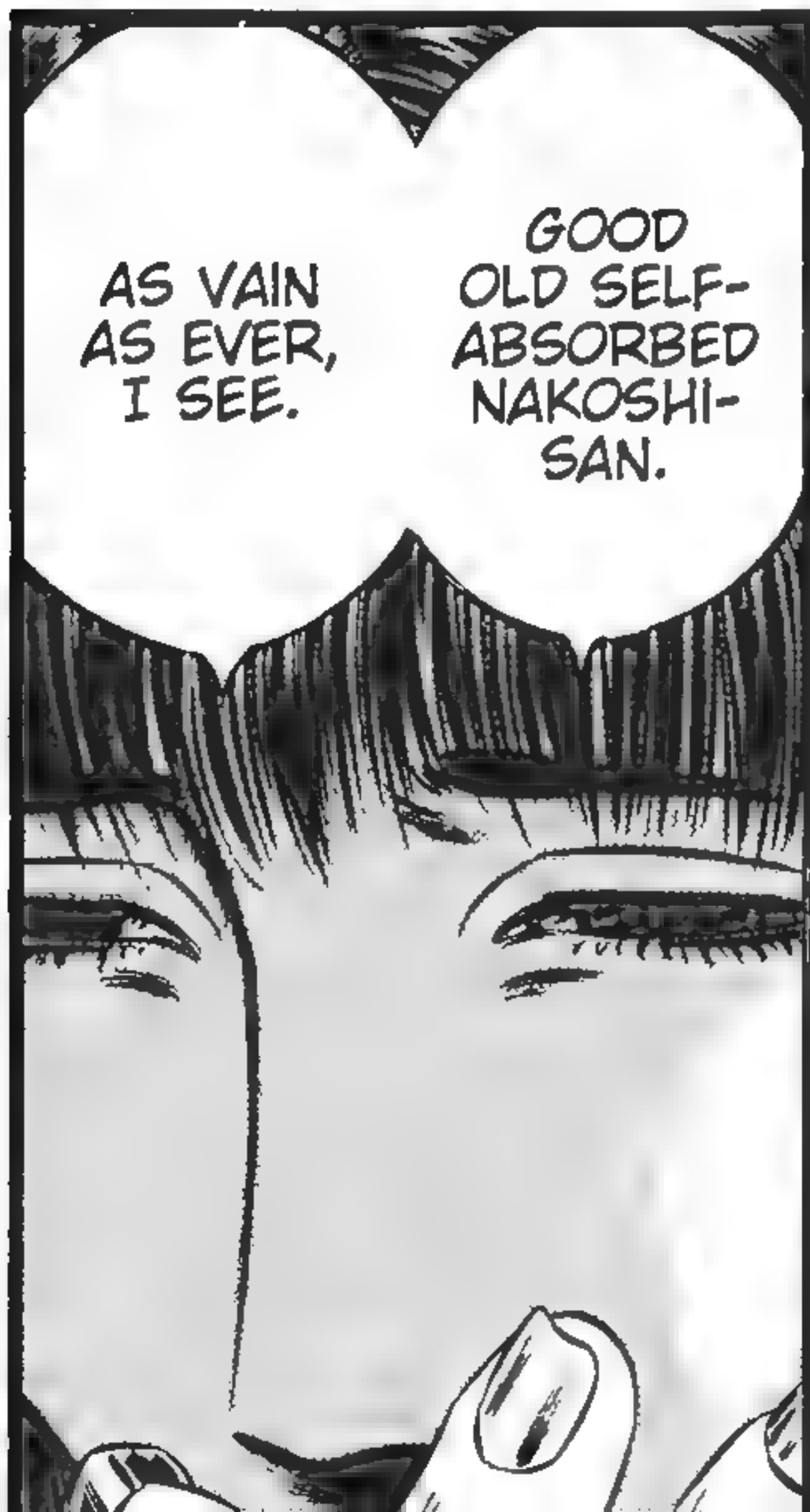
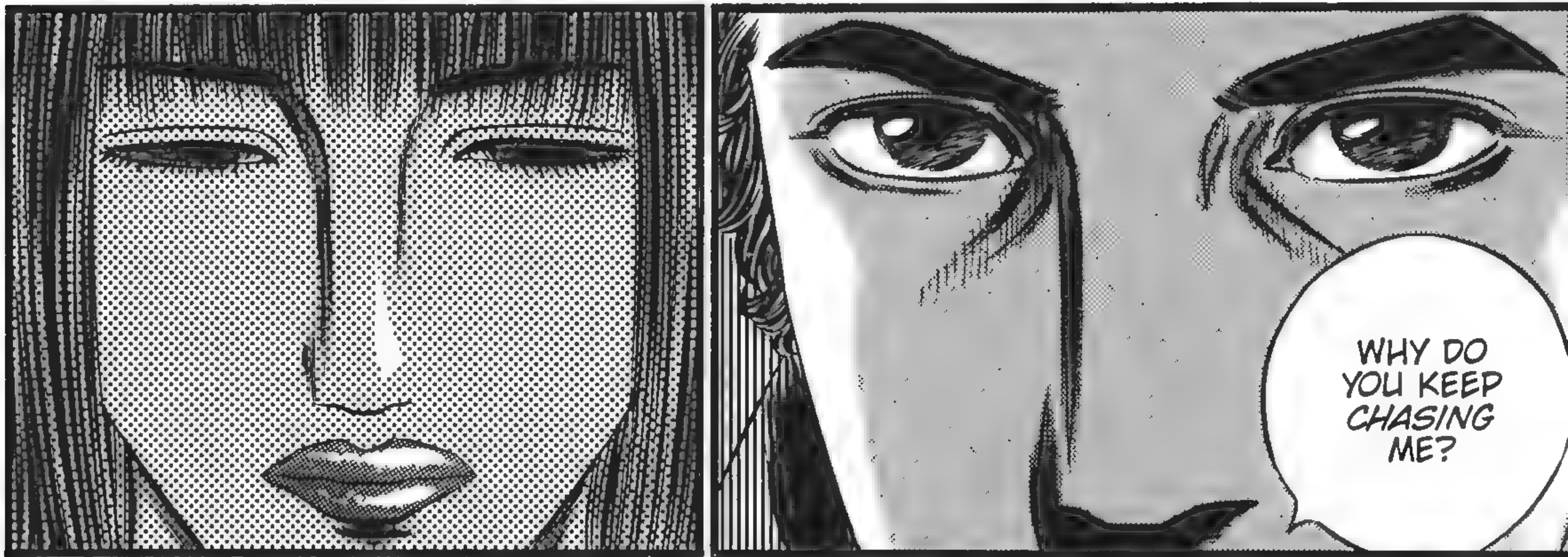


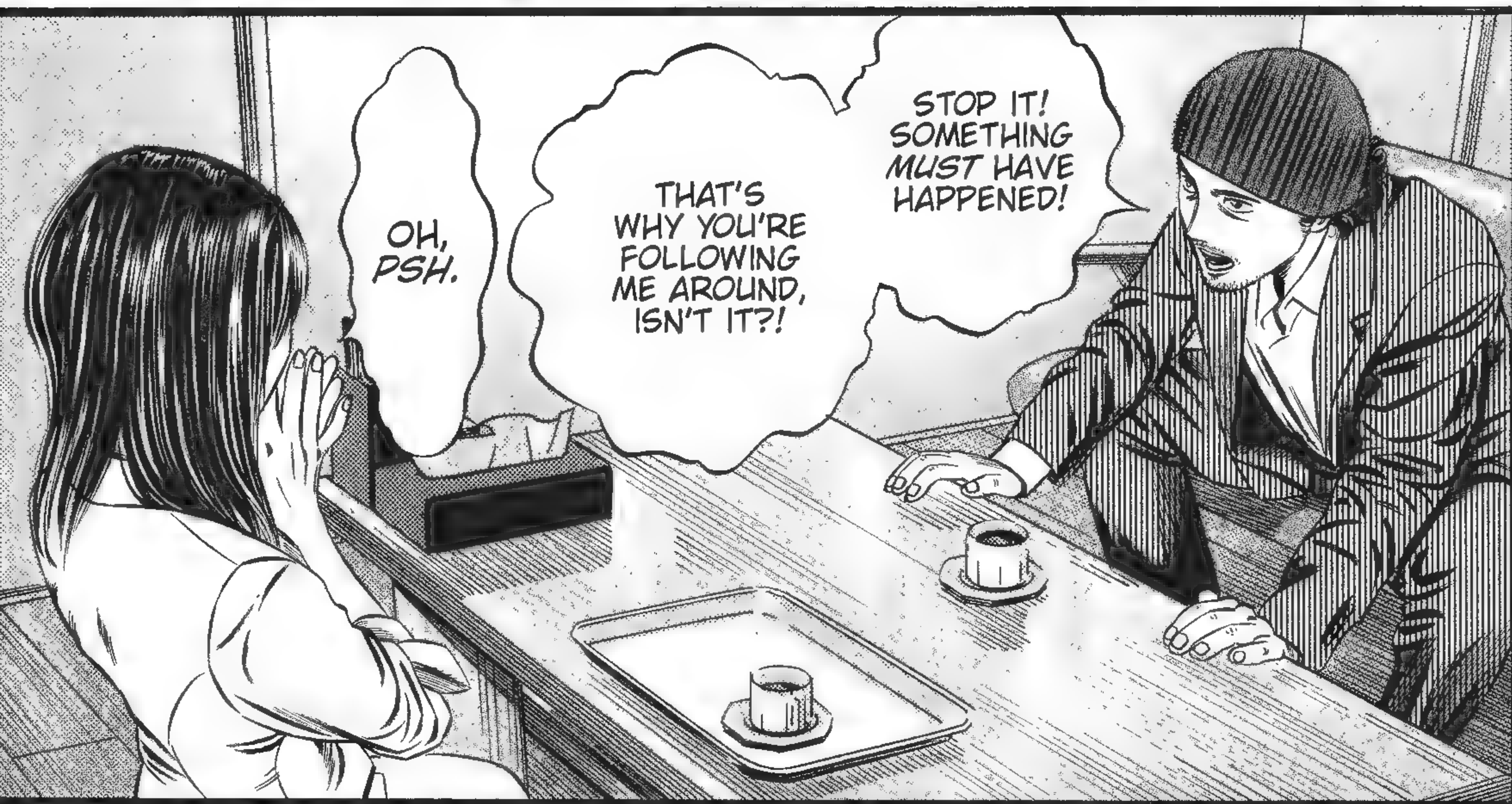


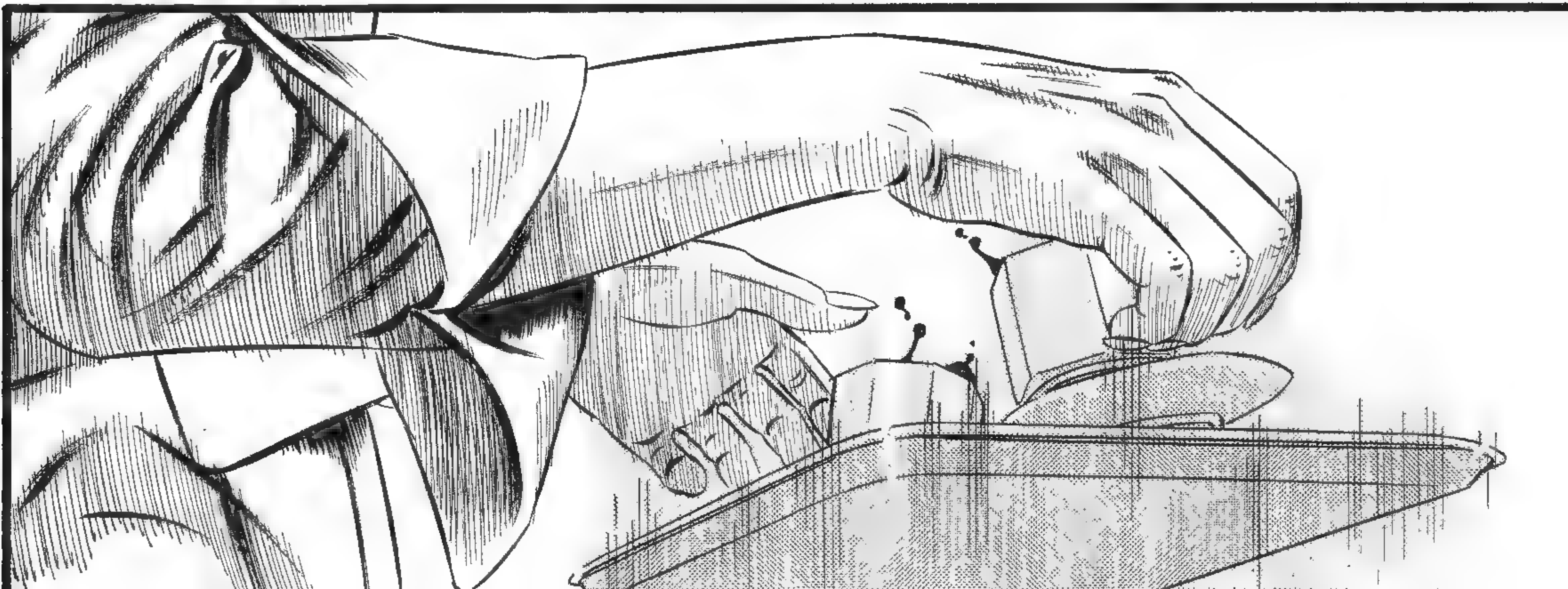
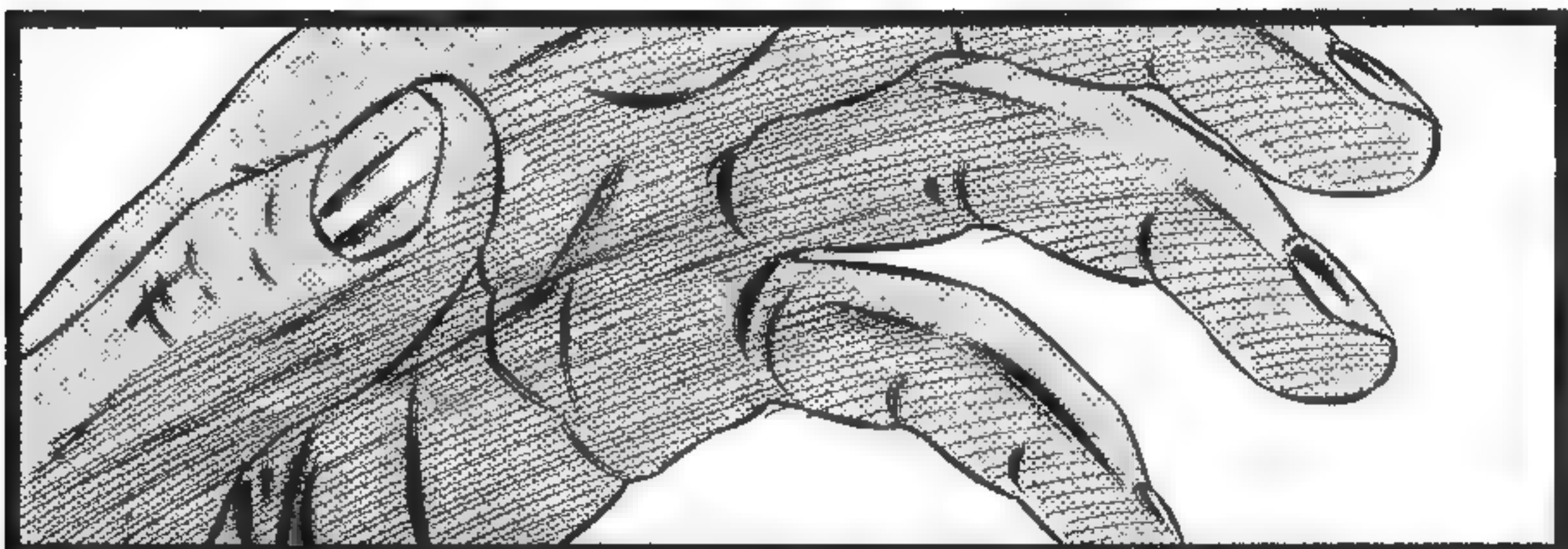
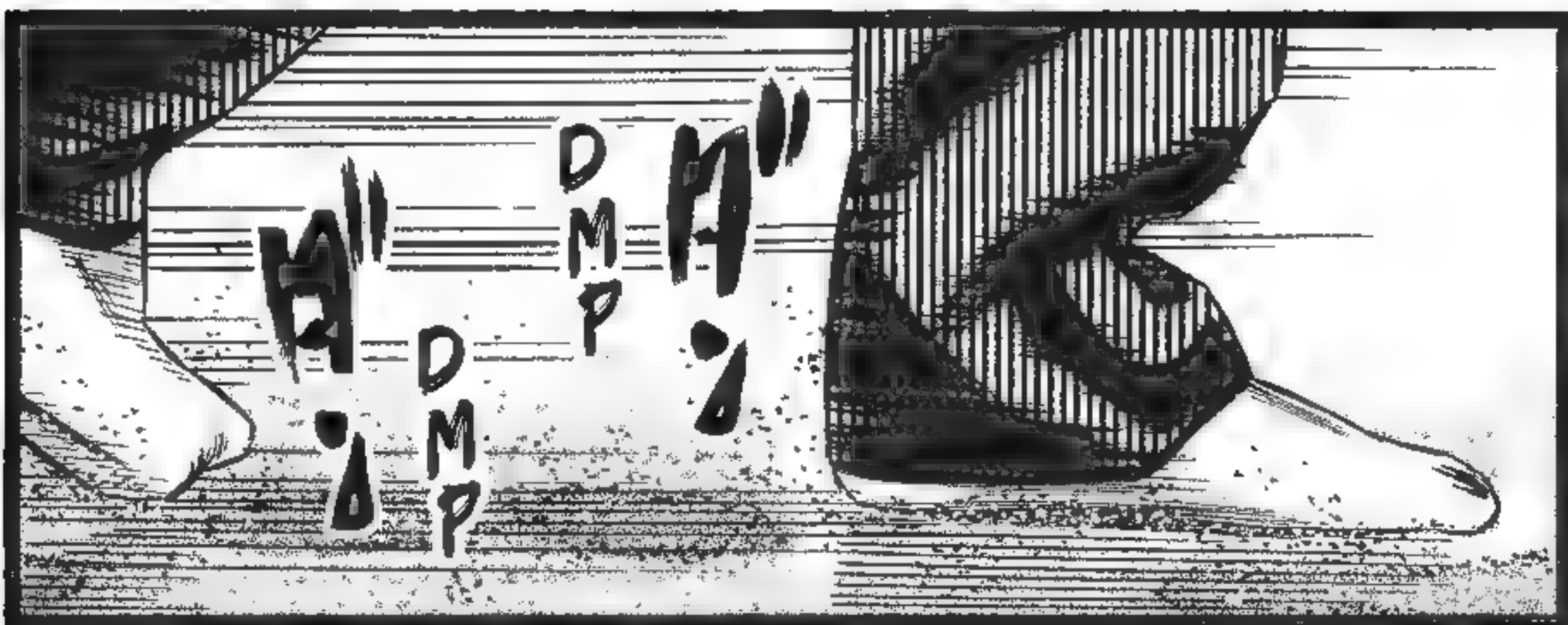
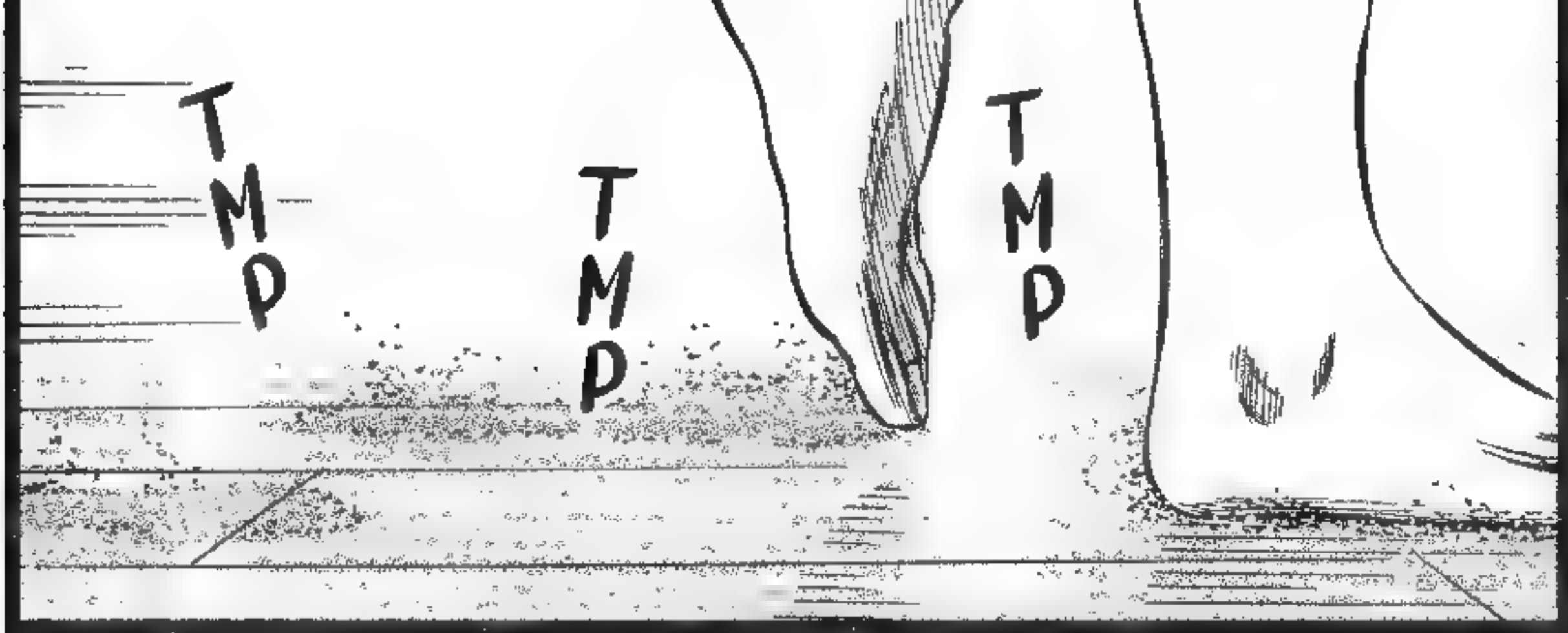


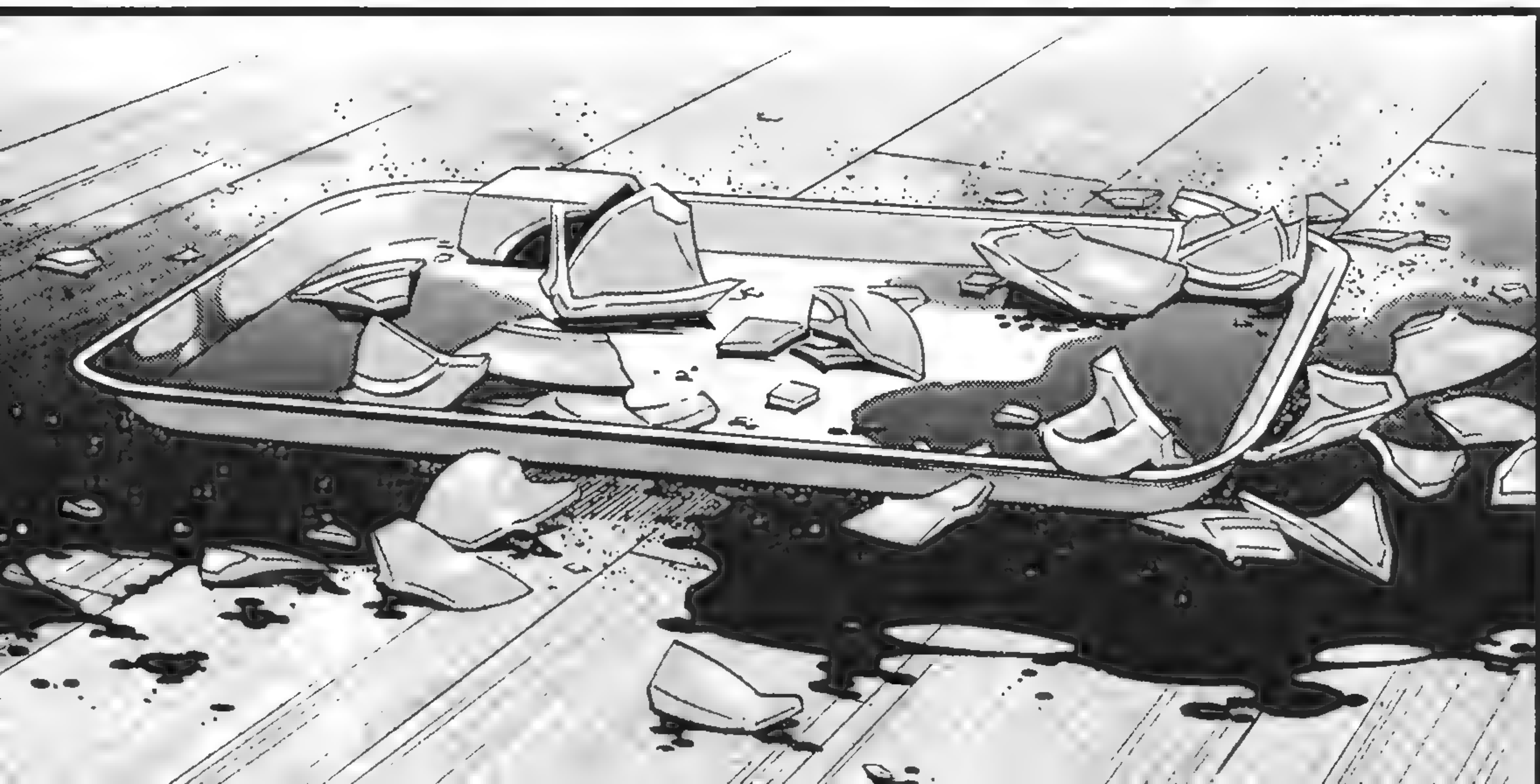












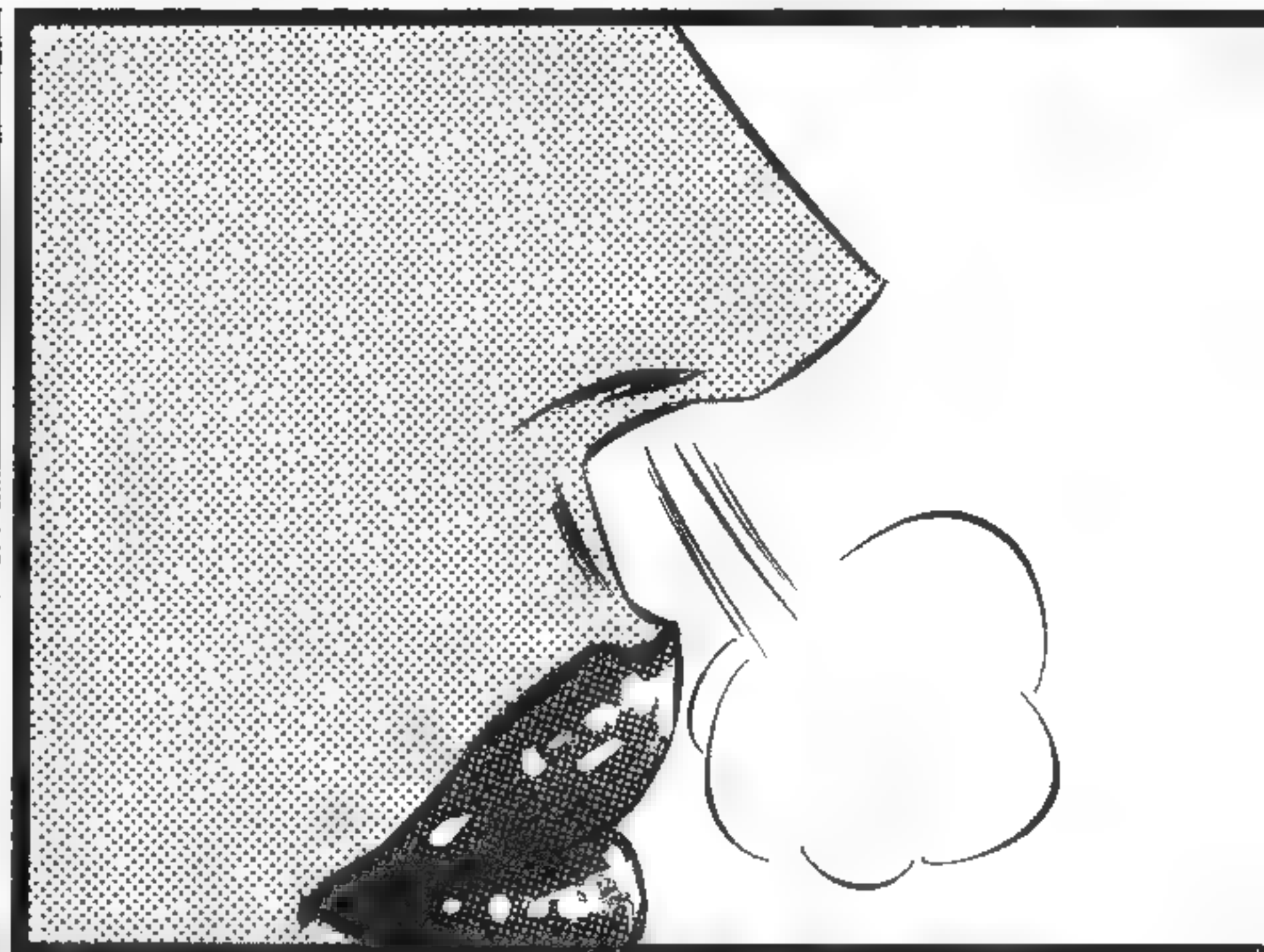


WE DID
HAVE SEX,
DIDN'T
WE?



NAKOSHI-
SAN...

WAIT...



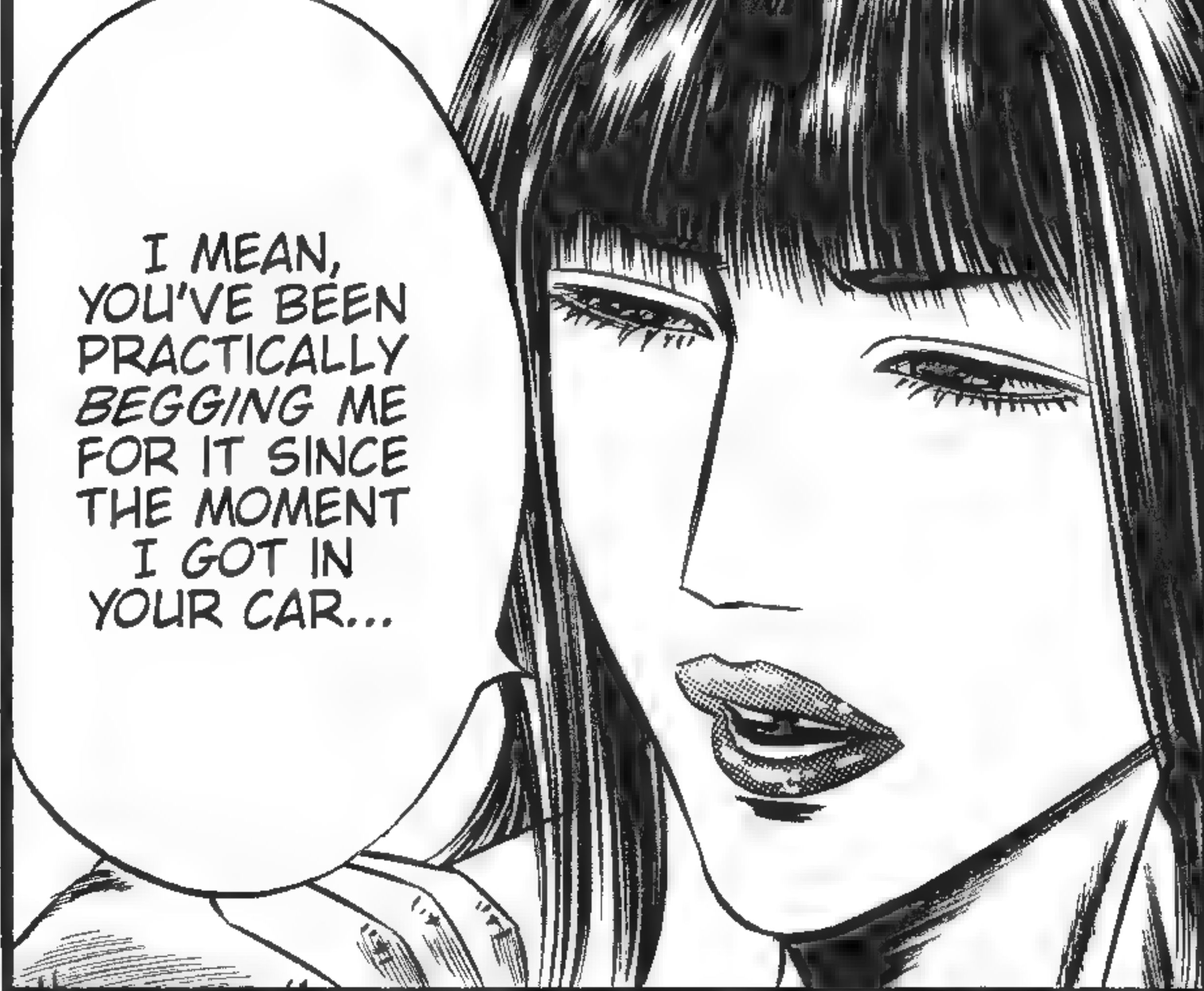
ARE YOU
MAKING A
MOVE RIGHT
NOW?

?!



WH-
WHAT?

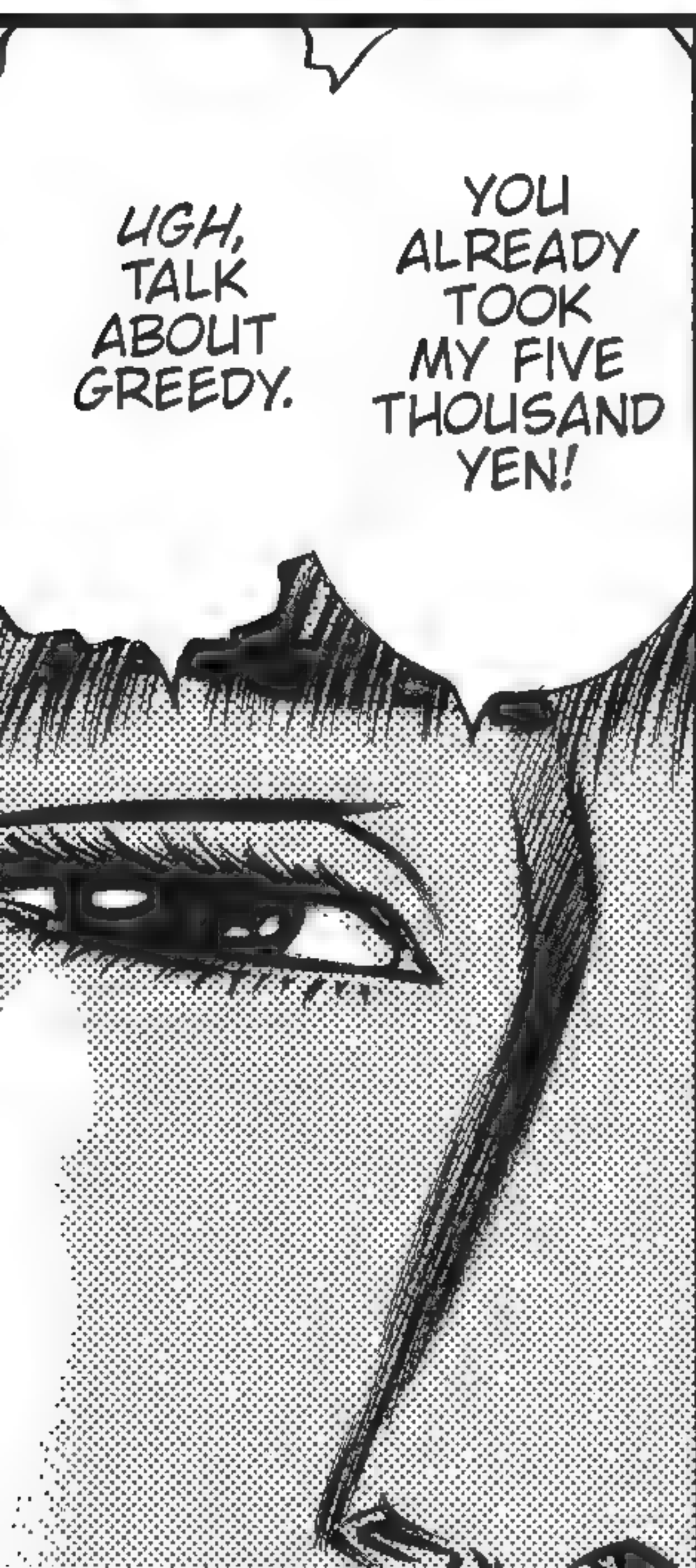
NO, THAT'S
NOT...!



I MEAN,
YOU'VE BEEN
PRACTICALLY
BEGGING ME
FOR IT SINCE
THE MOMENT
I GOT IN
YOUR CAR...



AND IT'S
THE LAMEST
THING I'VE
EVER SEEN.



UGH,
TALK
ABOUT
GREEDY.

YOU
ALREADY
TOOK
MY FIVE
THOUSAND
YEN!



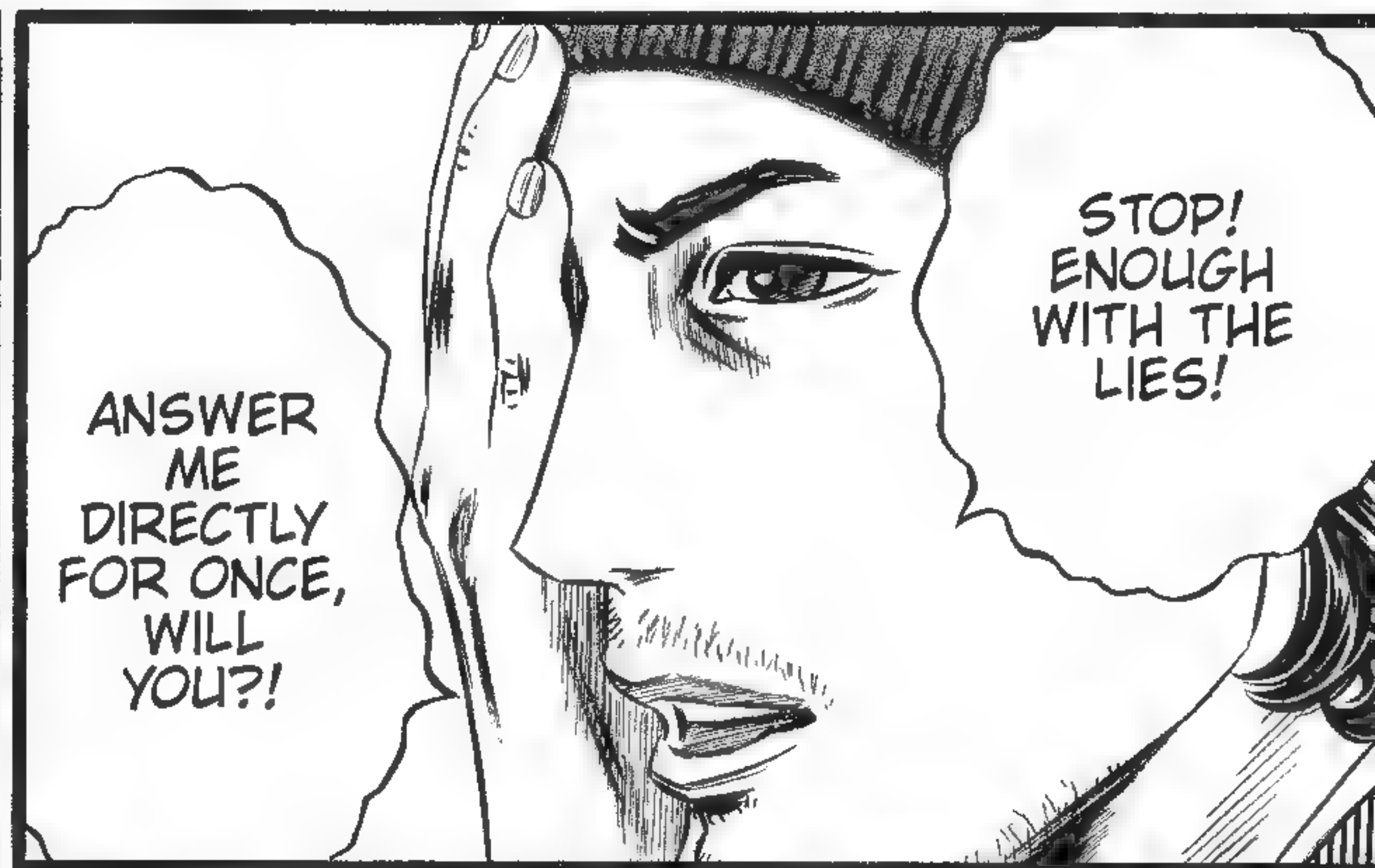
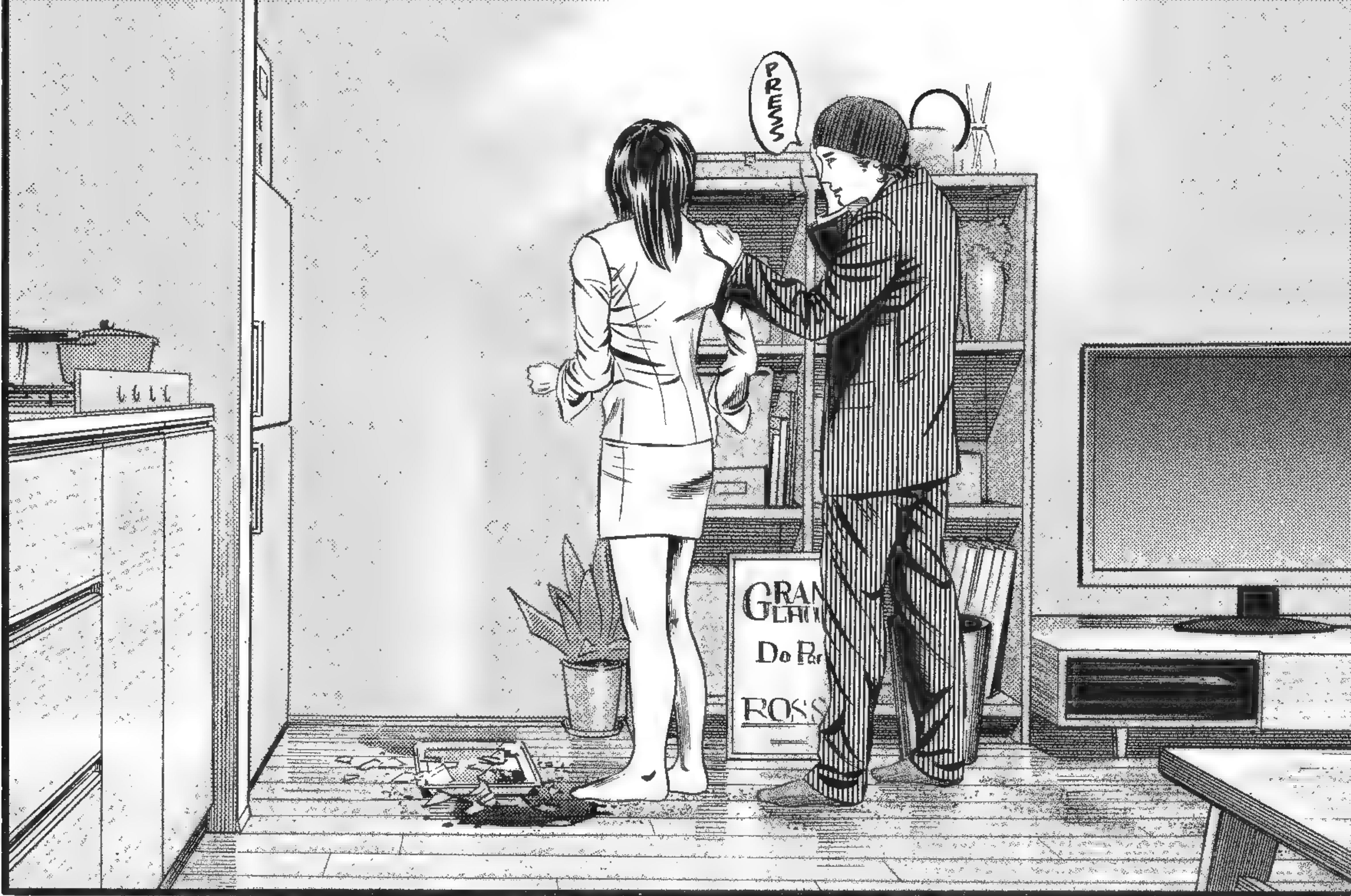
WHEN I JOKED
ABOUT PAYING
FOR THE RIDE
WITH SEX, DID
YOU ACTUALLY
TAKE ME
SERIOUSLY?

WAIT A
SEC.



I JUST
WANT TO
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED!
WHAT THIS
THING
BETWEEN
US WAS!

THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I'M HERE
FOR!

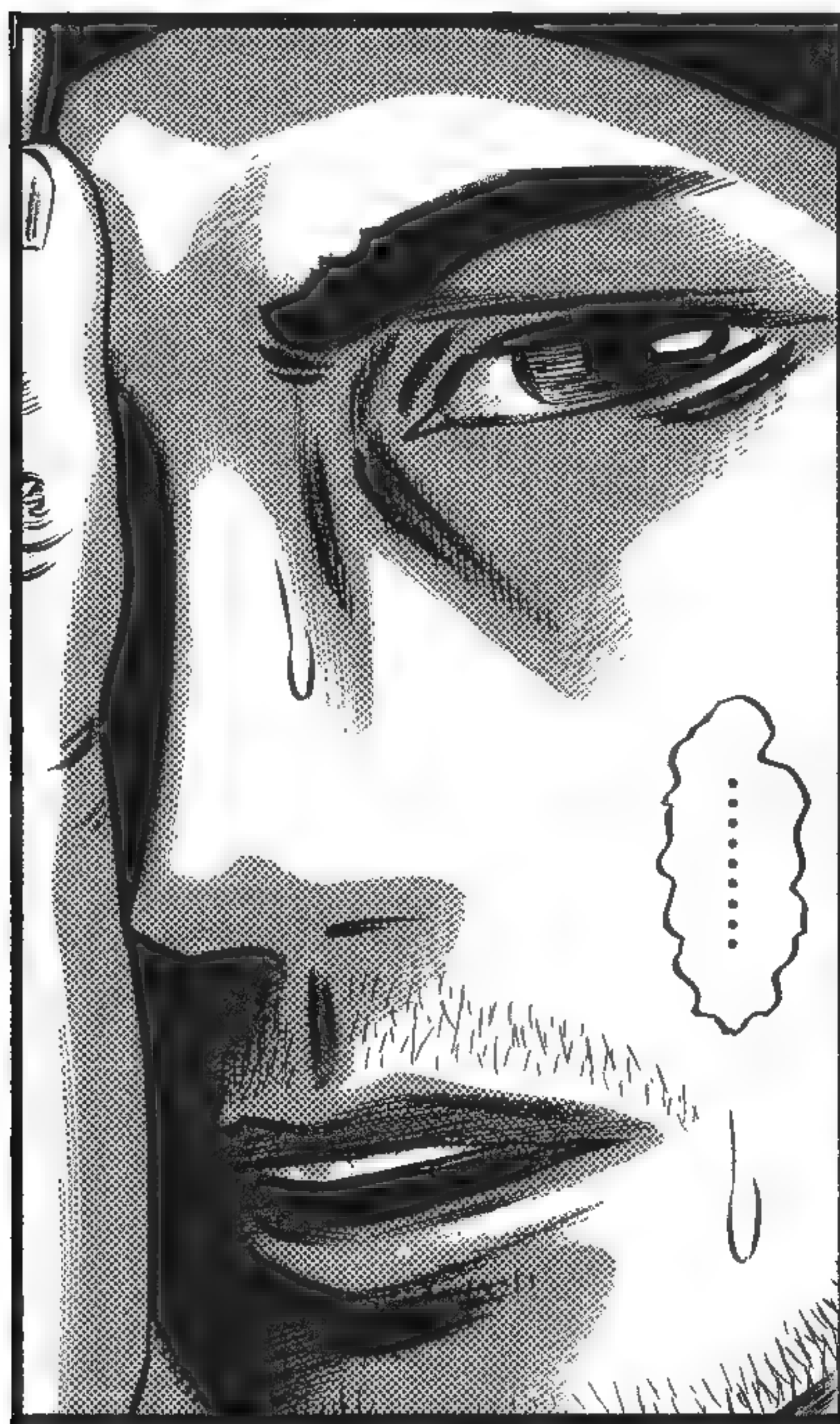






JUST COME
OUT AND
SAY IT.

IF YOU'RE
TRYING TO
GET WITH
ME...



AND SPEW
OUT THESE
ASS-COVERING
LIES. WELL,
I SEE RIGHT
THROUGH
THEM!

BUT NOOO,
YOU HAVE
TO PLAY
COOL...



SO...?

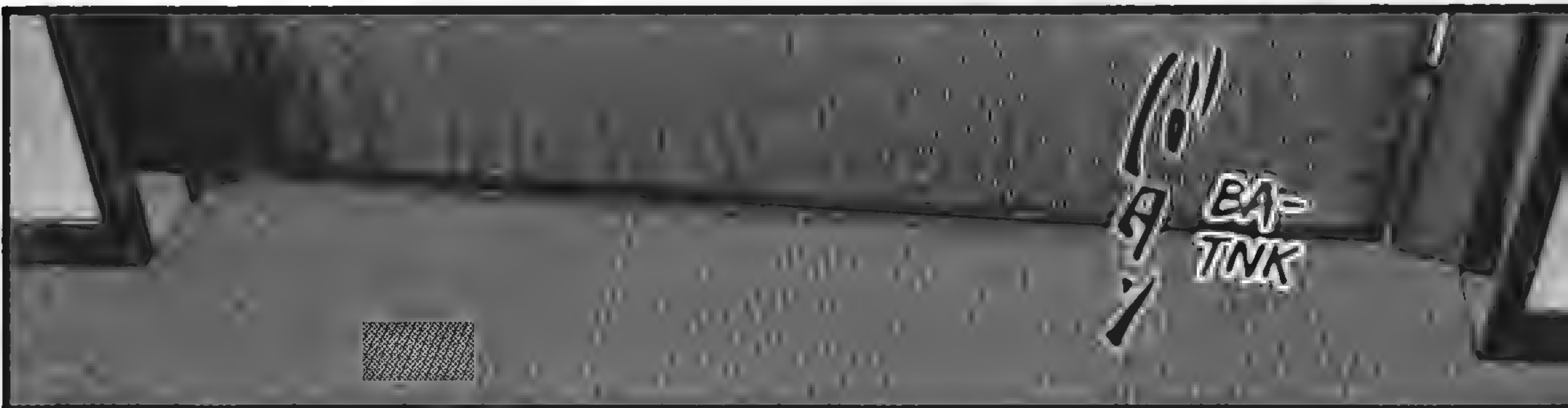


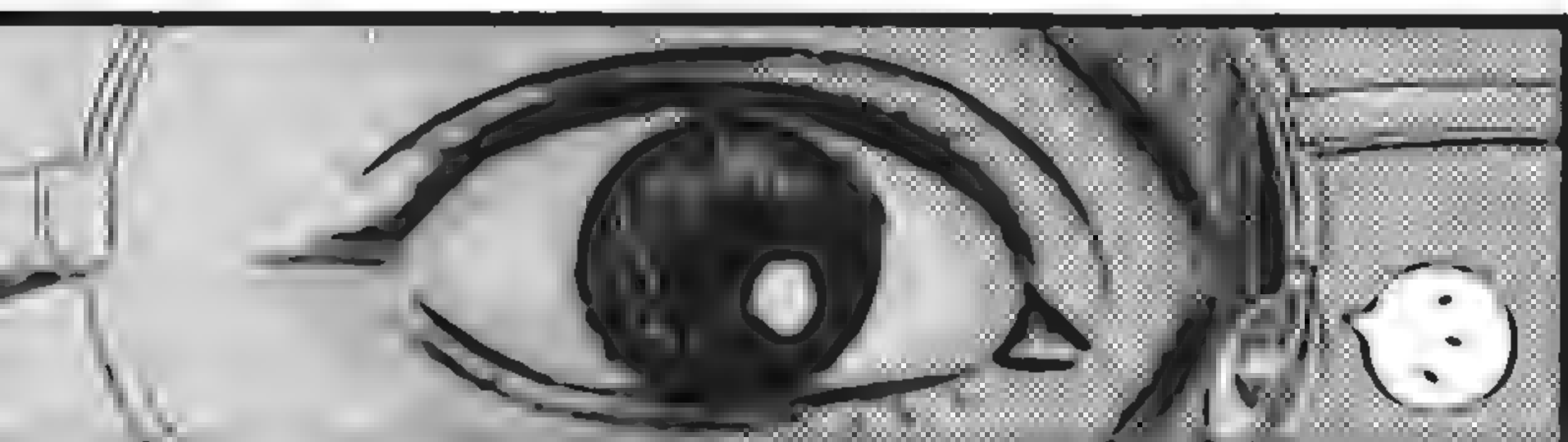
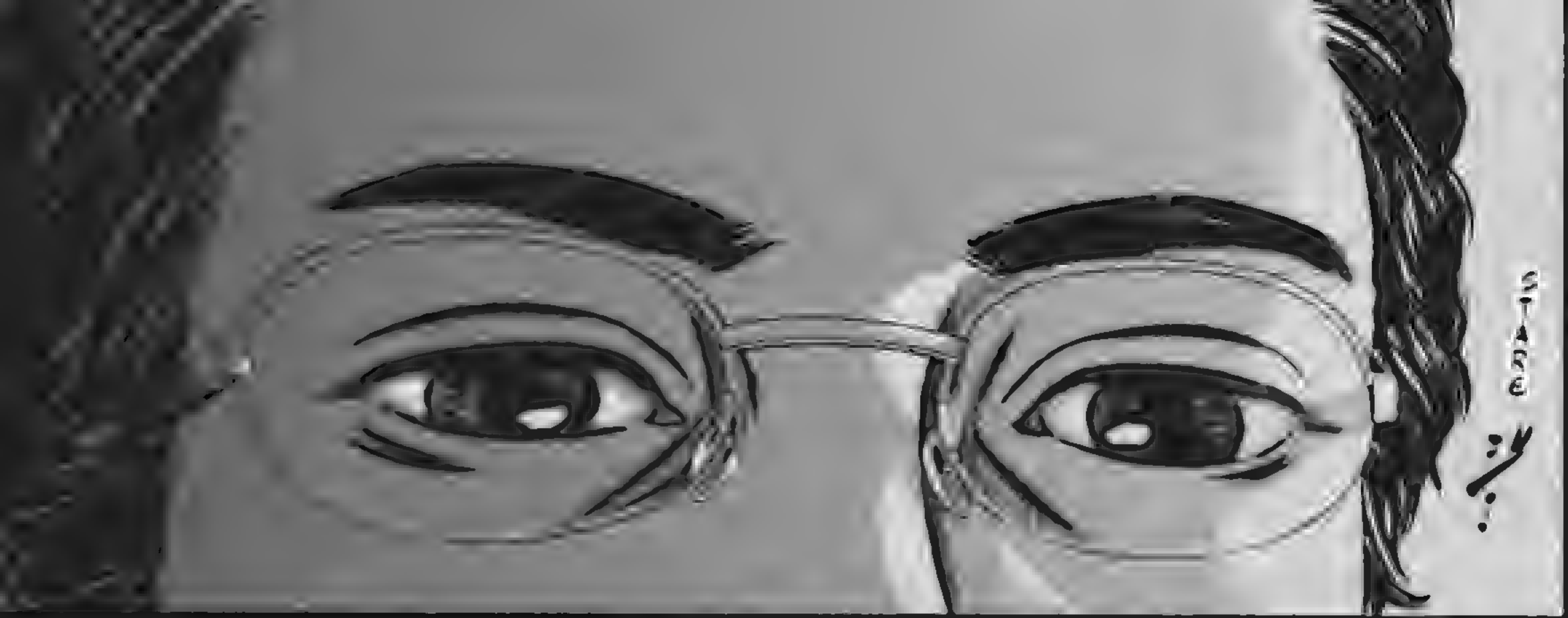
?!



SO??









why do you
keep staring
at my face
like that?

Oh, I'm not
looking at
your *face*.

Say...



.....
?

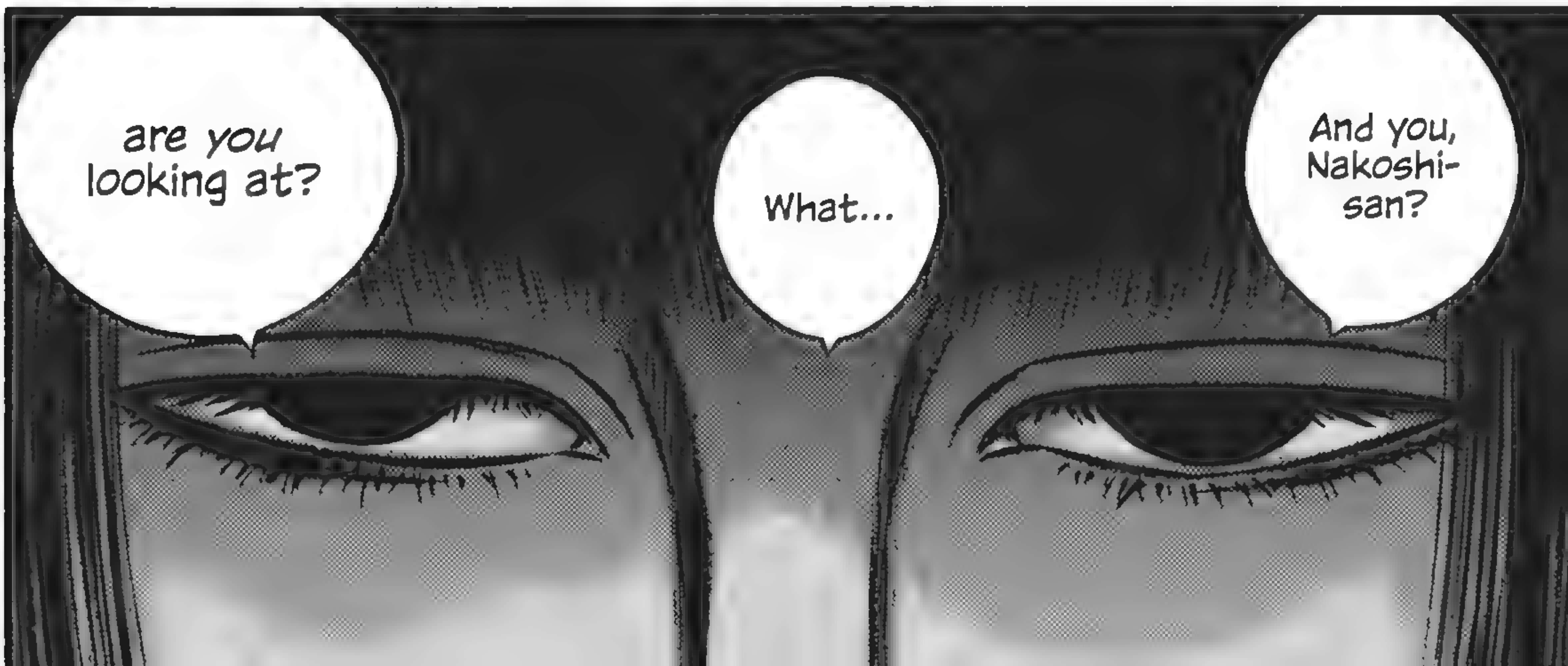


I'm
looking...

at you,
Nakoshi-
san.



?



are you
looking at?

What...

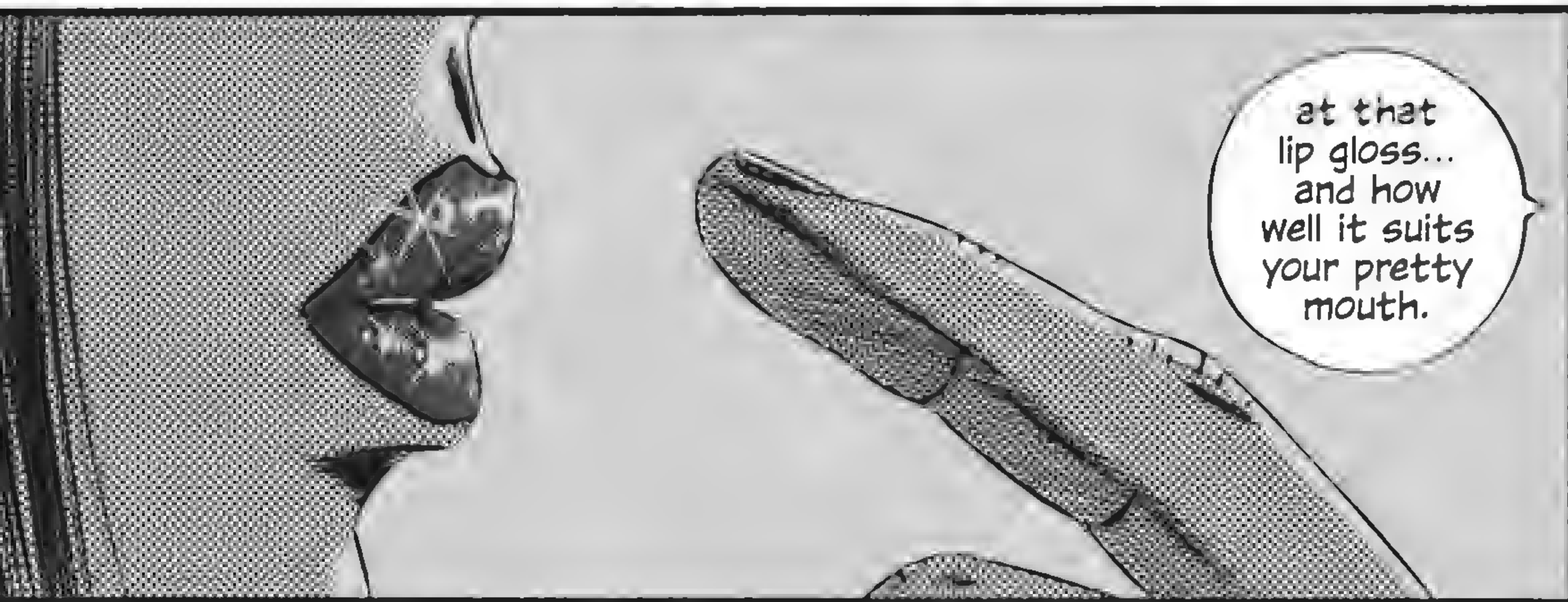
And you,
Nakoshi-
san?



Well, for starters, I'm looking...



Hmm.



at that lip gloss... and how well it suits your pretty mouth.



Ah...

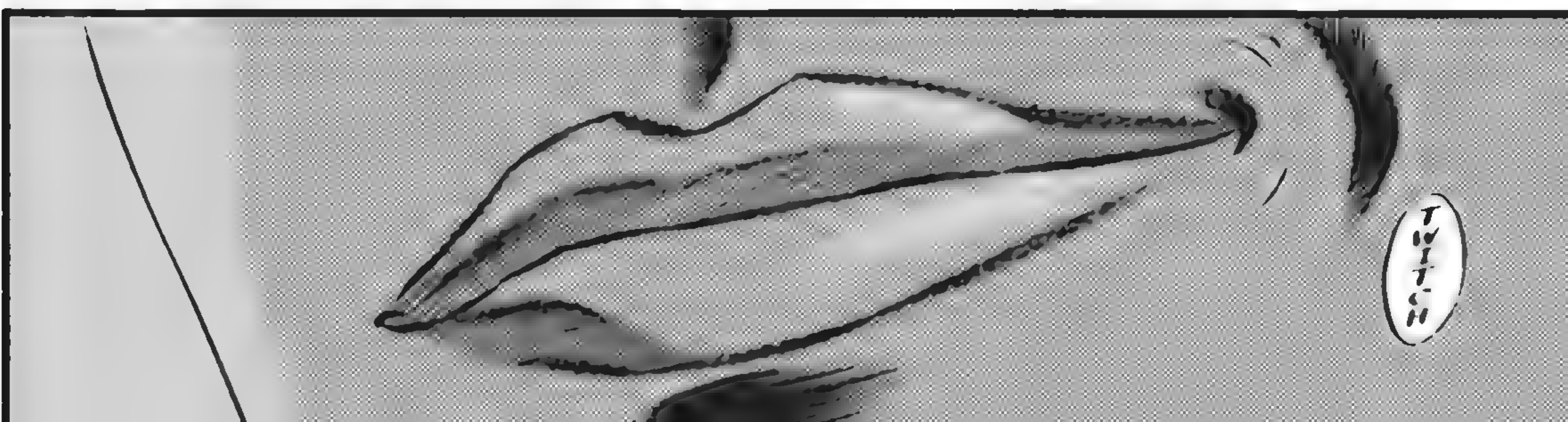


SHF



really all you see?

Are my lips...



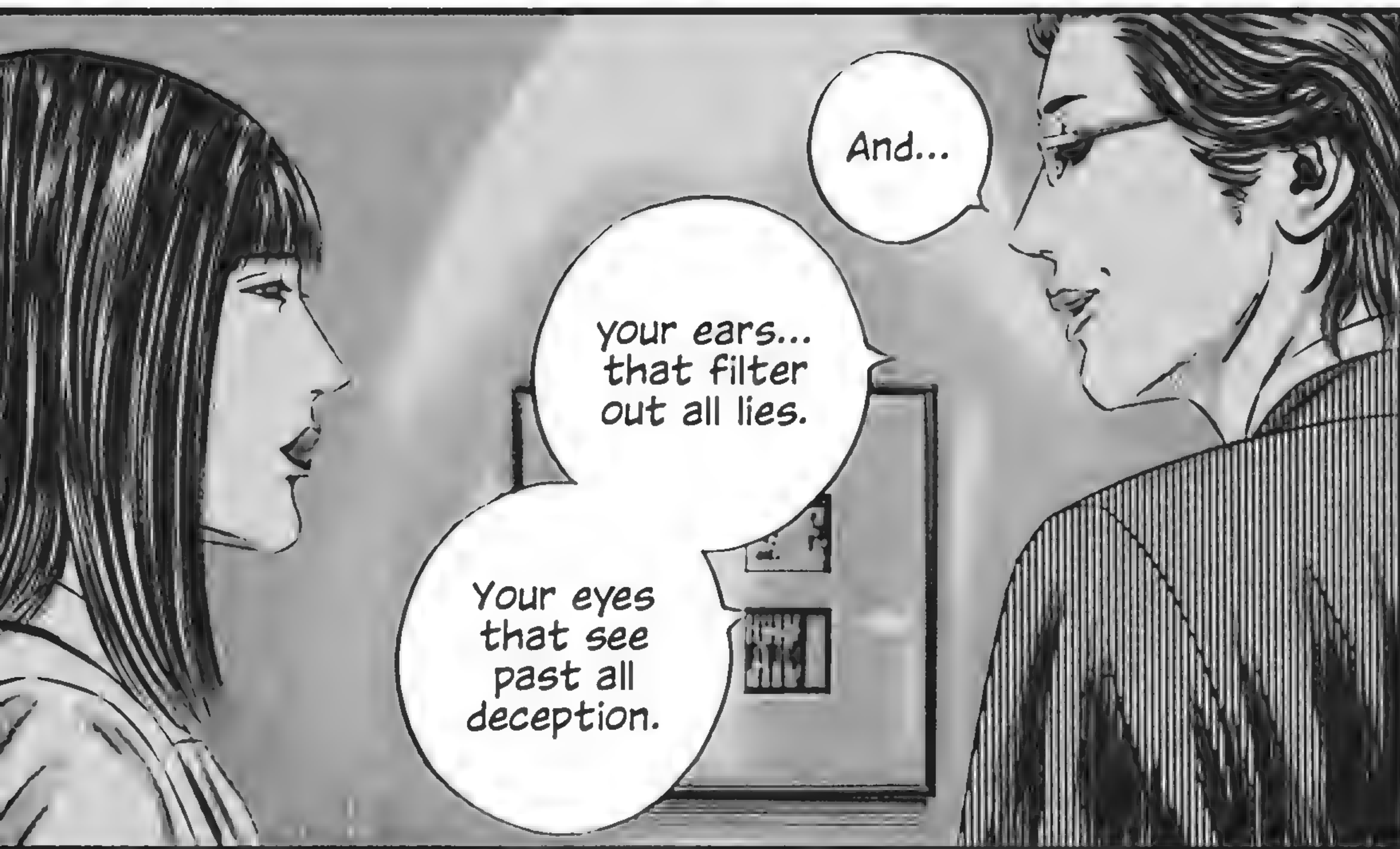


What?



Why wouldn't
I look at
them? Those
beautiful
lips...

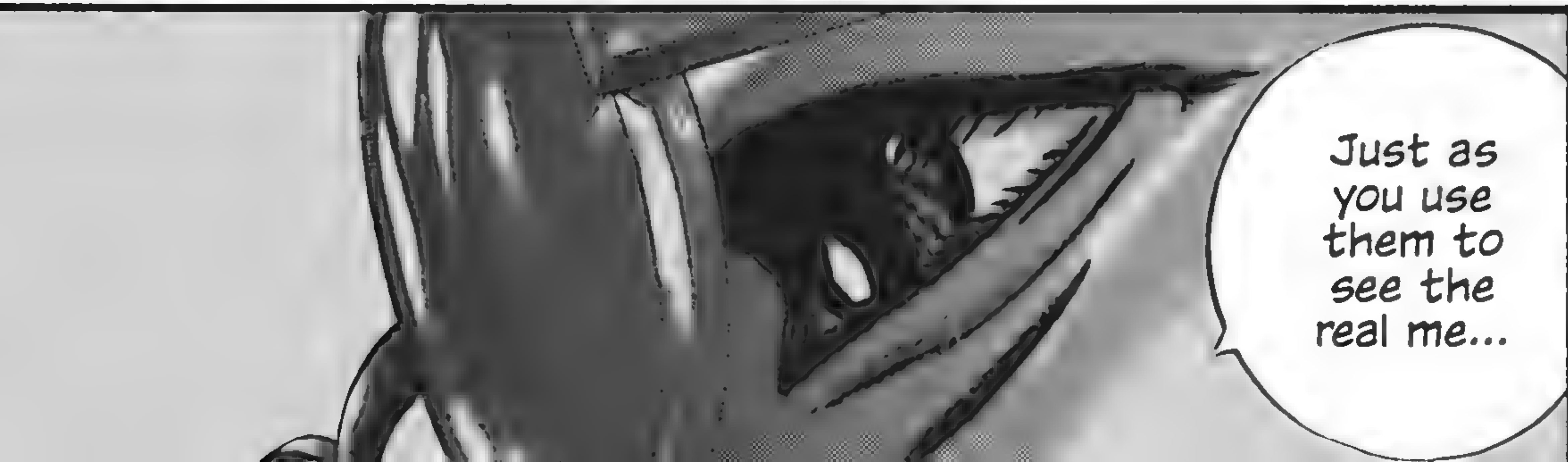
that
only
speak
truth.



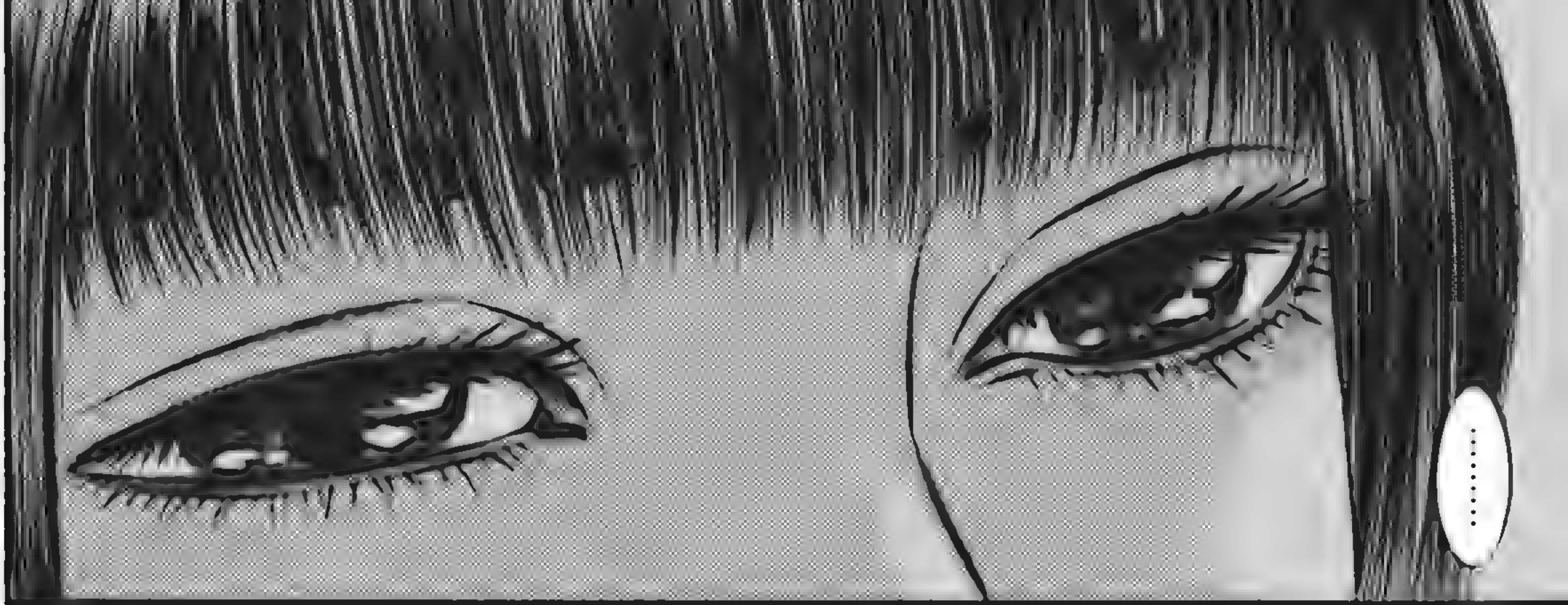
And...

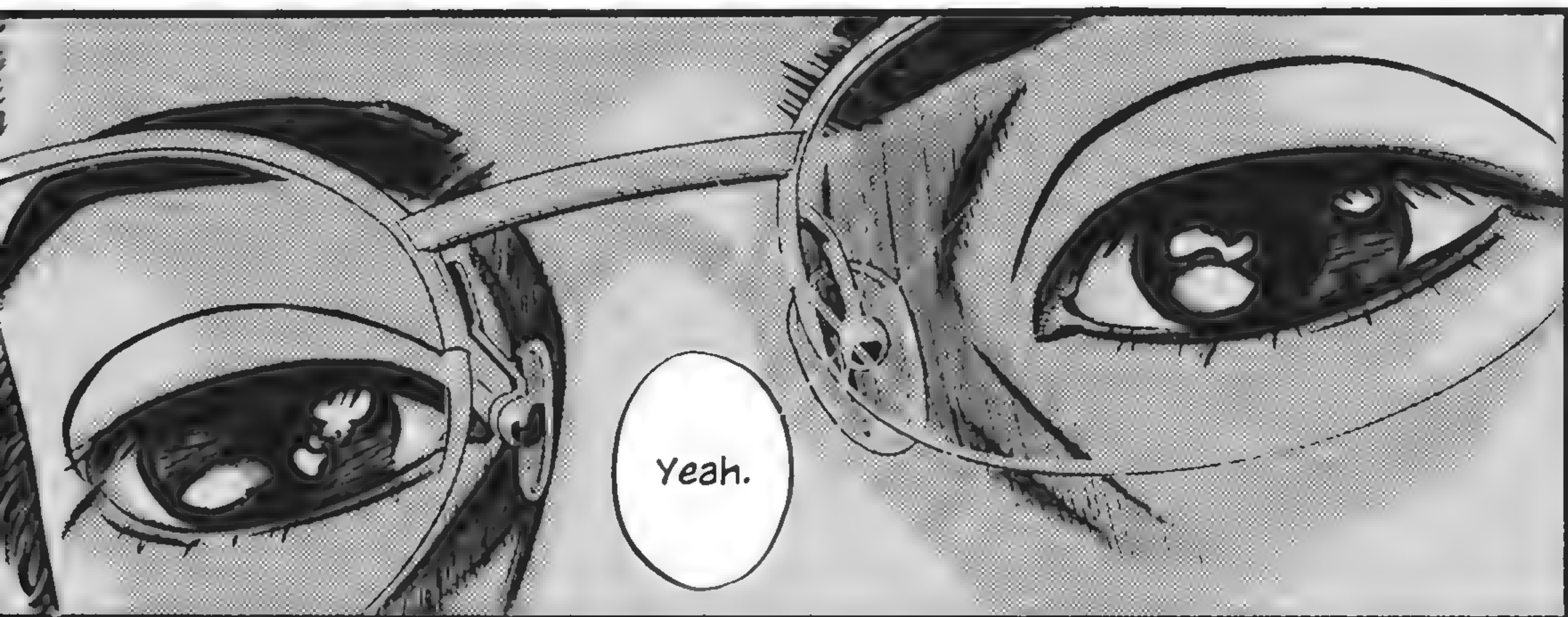
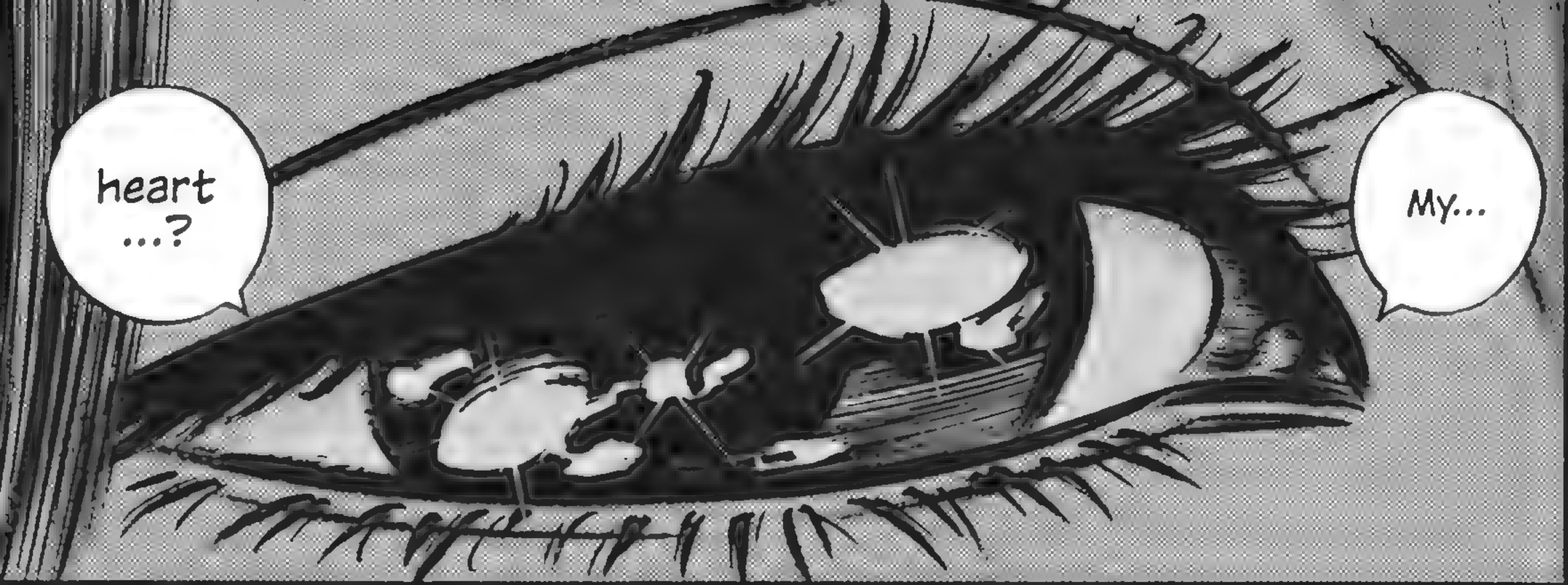
your ears...
that filter
out all lies.

Your eyes
that see
past all
deception.



Just as
you use
them to
see the
real me...







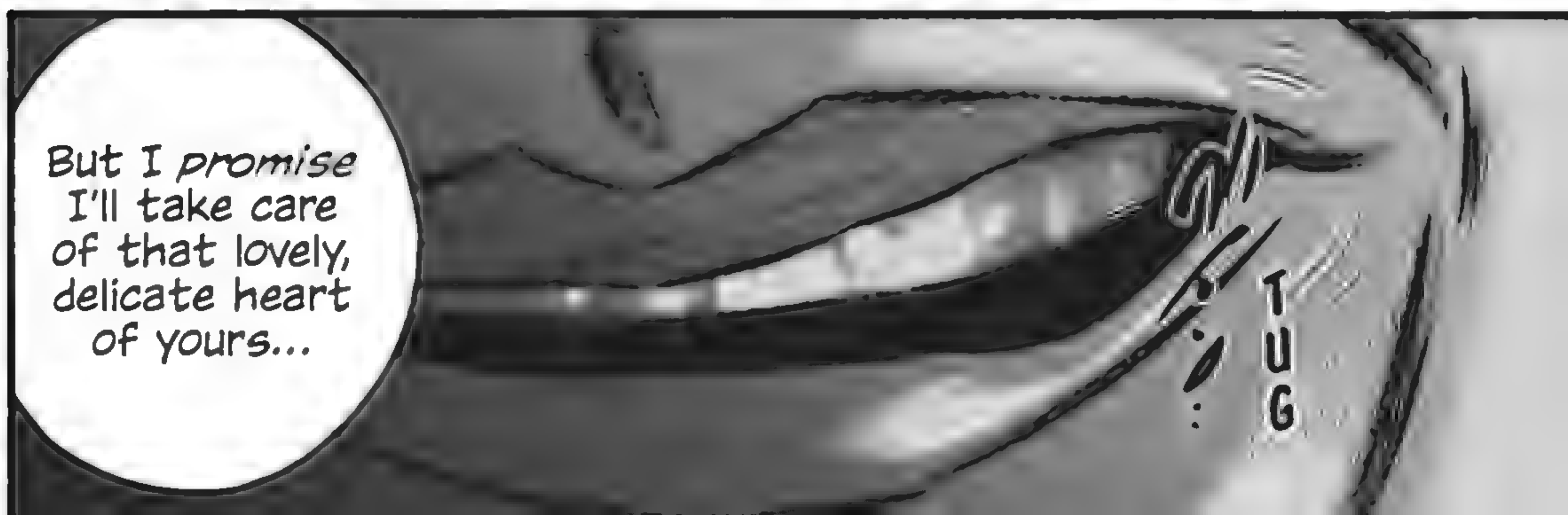
Oh, but
I can.

And what
a *beautiful*
heart it is
too. So pure
and clear.



But because
you're so *pure*,
it hurts to
be misunder-
stood...

and
that beautiful,
passionate
heart of yours
carries its share
of scars from
that, doesn't
it?



But I *promise*
I'll take care
of that lovely,
delicate heart
of yours...

TUG







?



Don't you remember what I told you?

SMILE



I can't kiss...

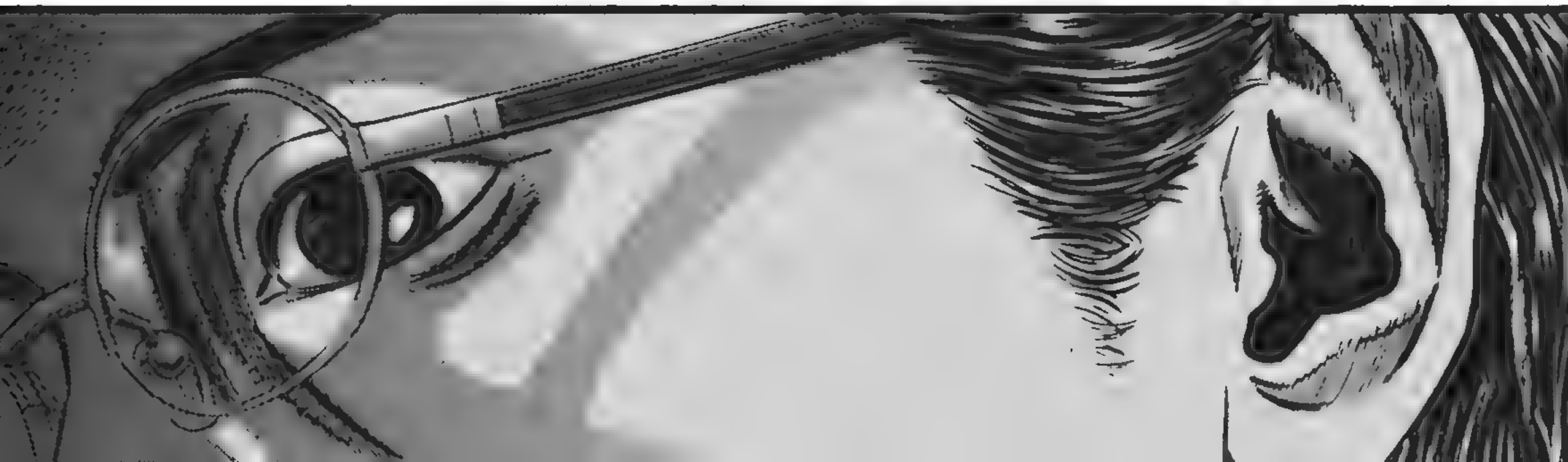
the lips of a liar.

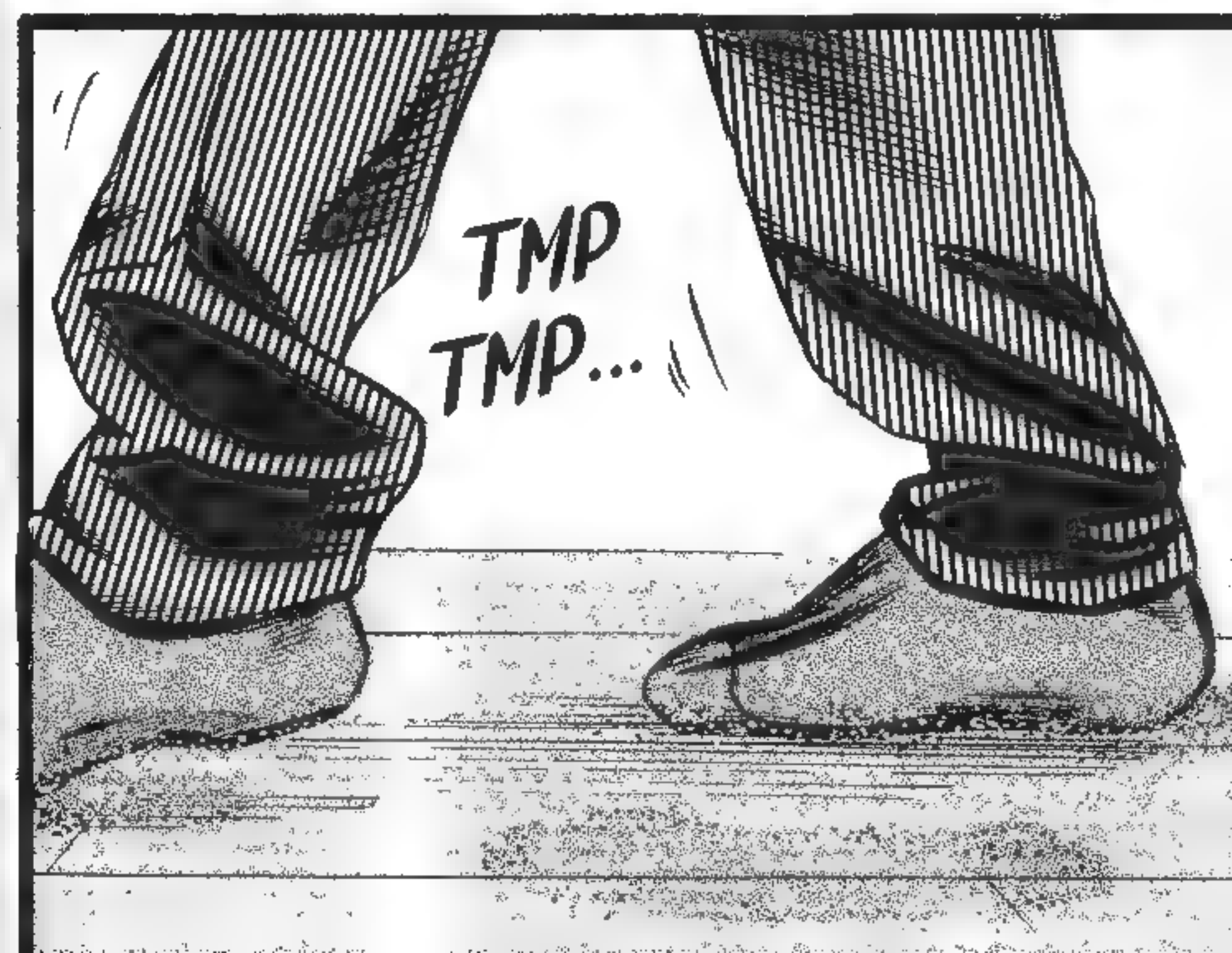
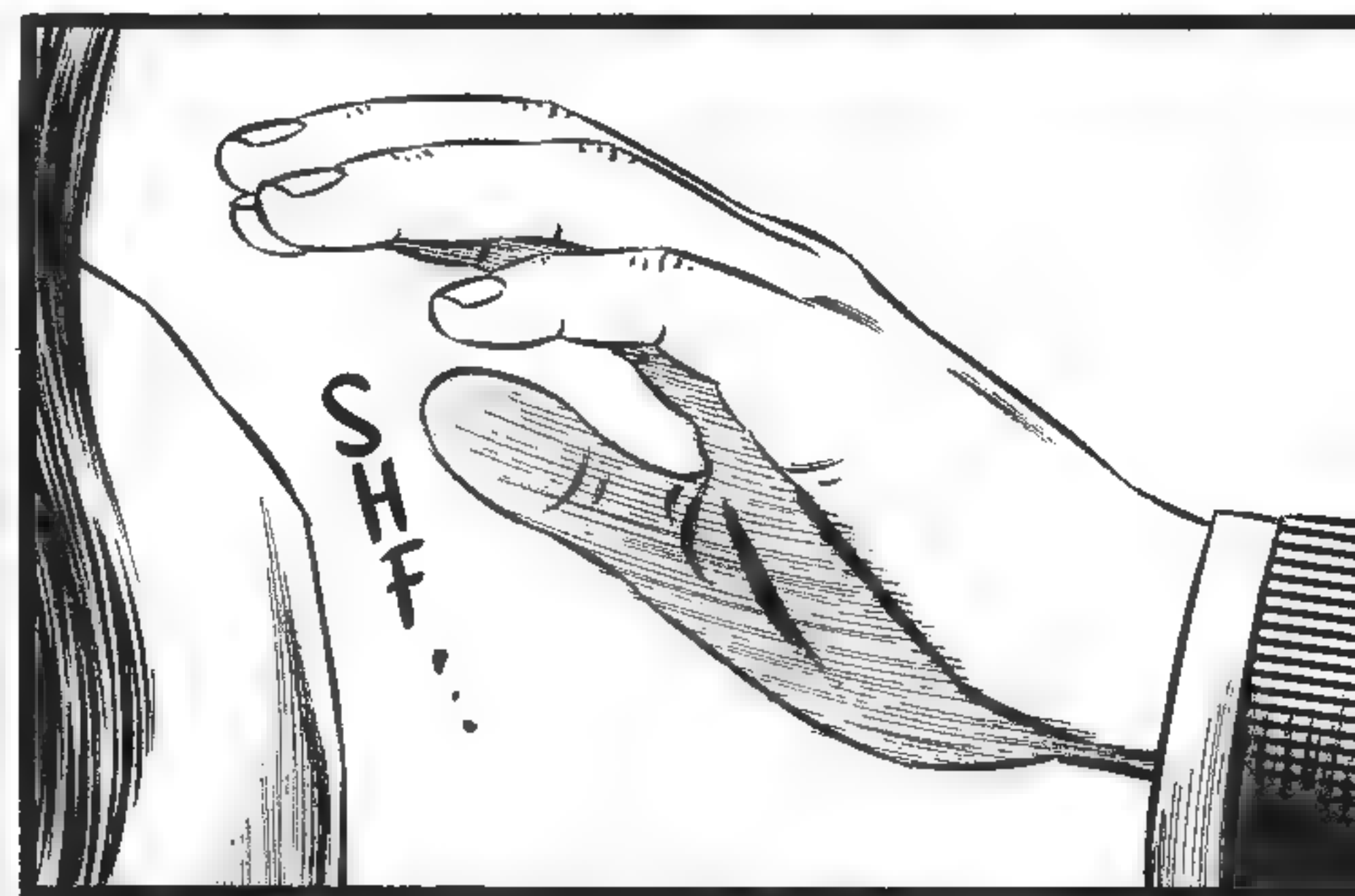


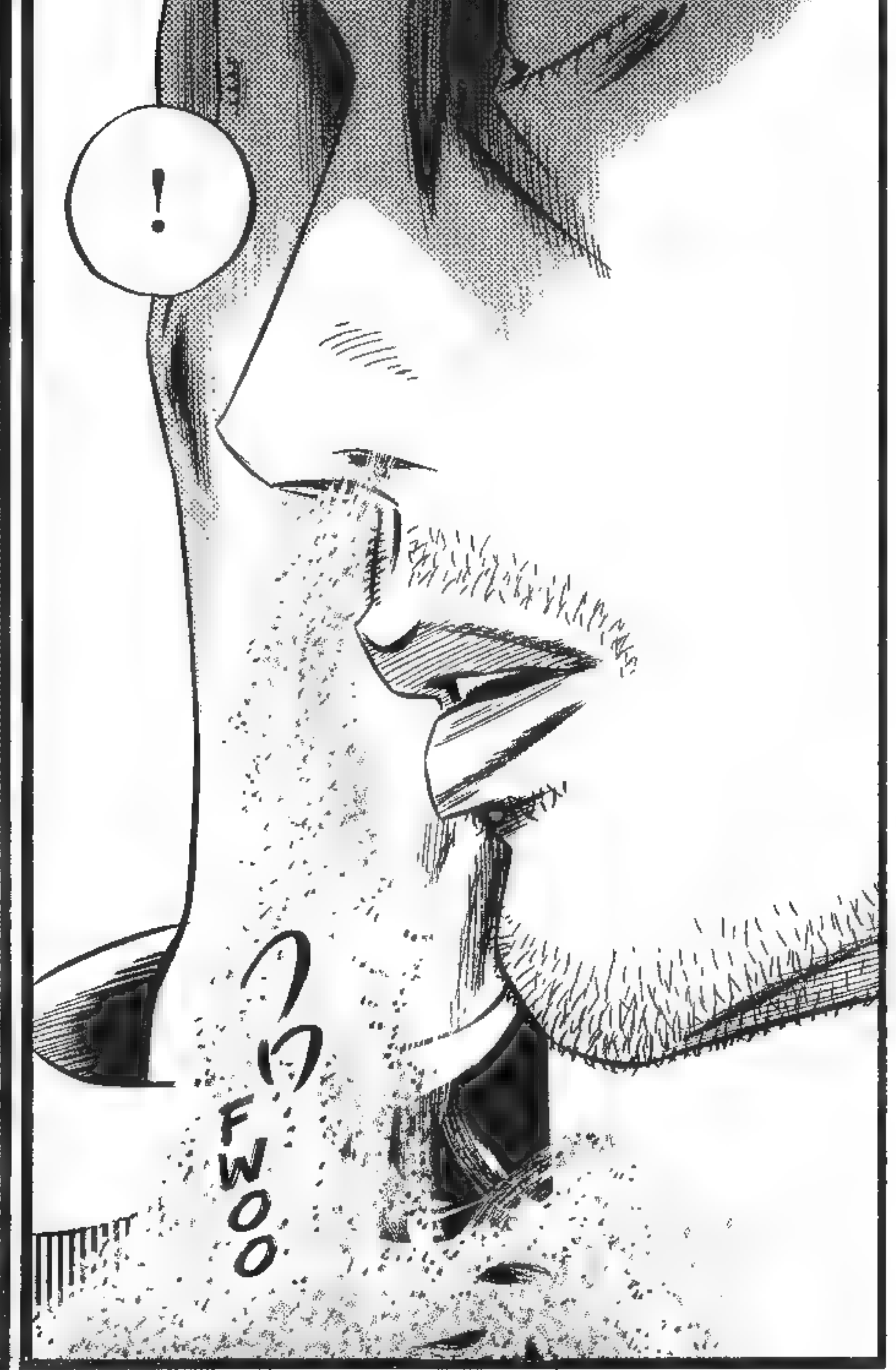
As if I'd screw you just because you're rich.

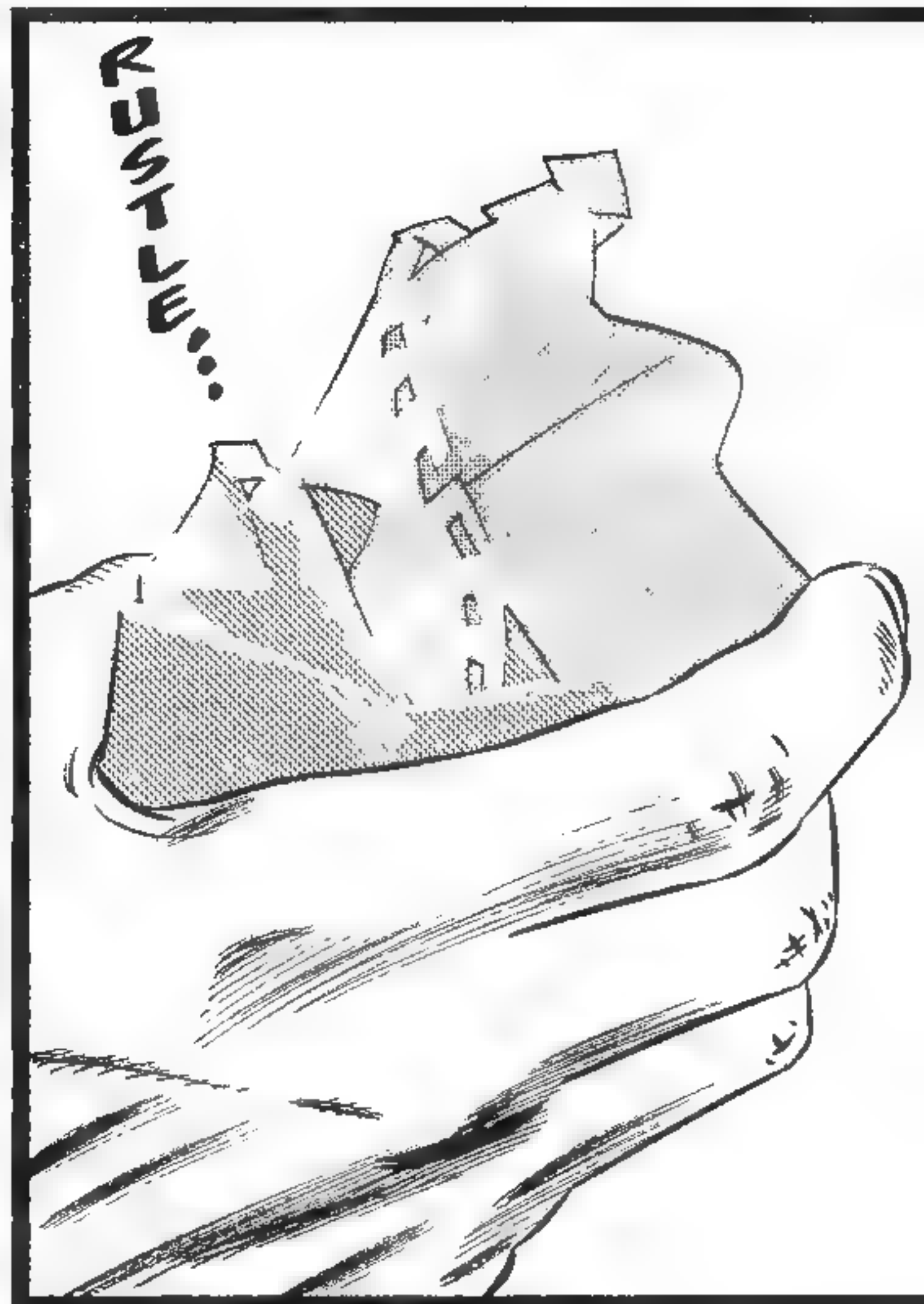
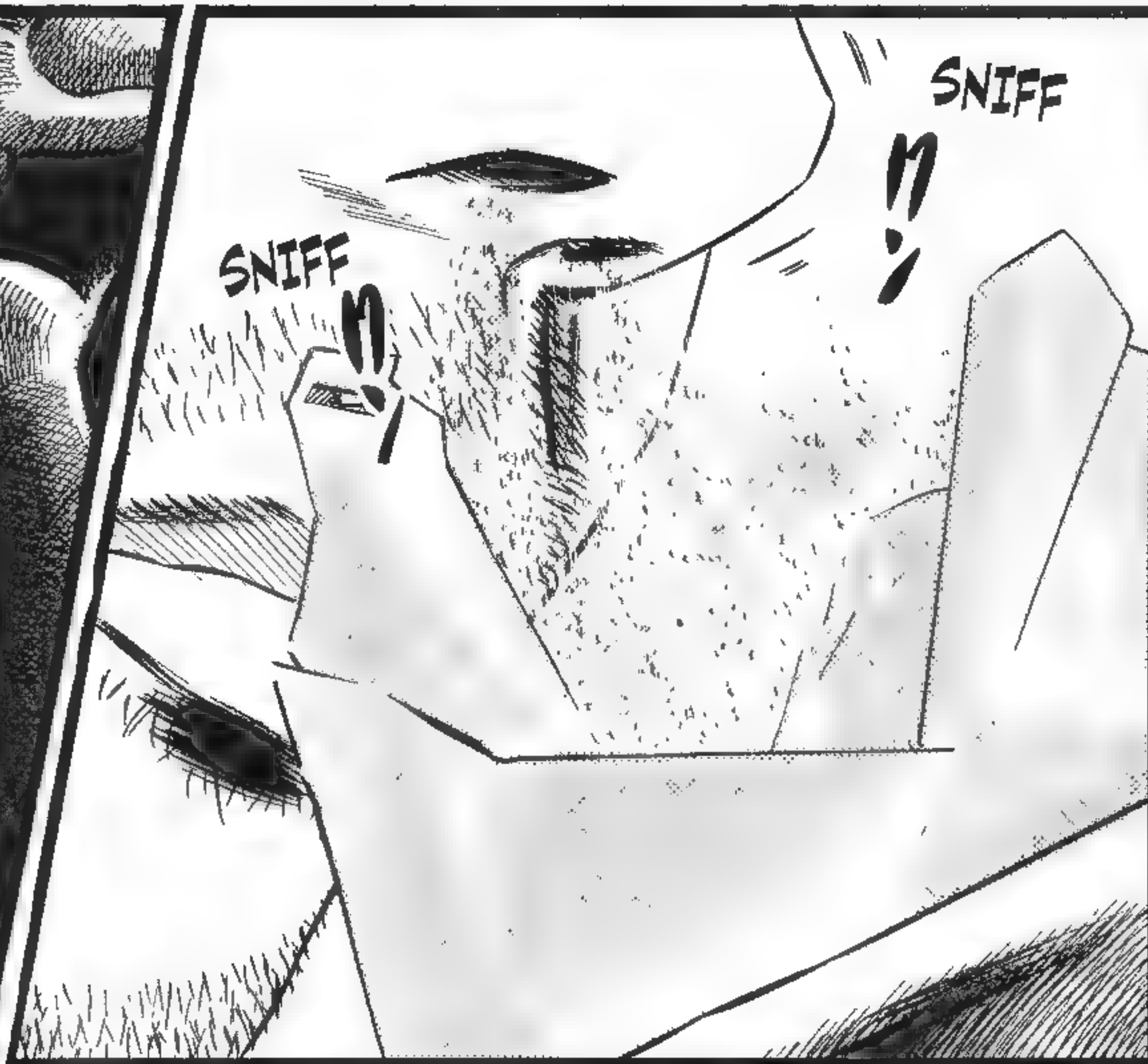


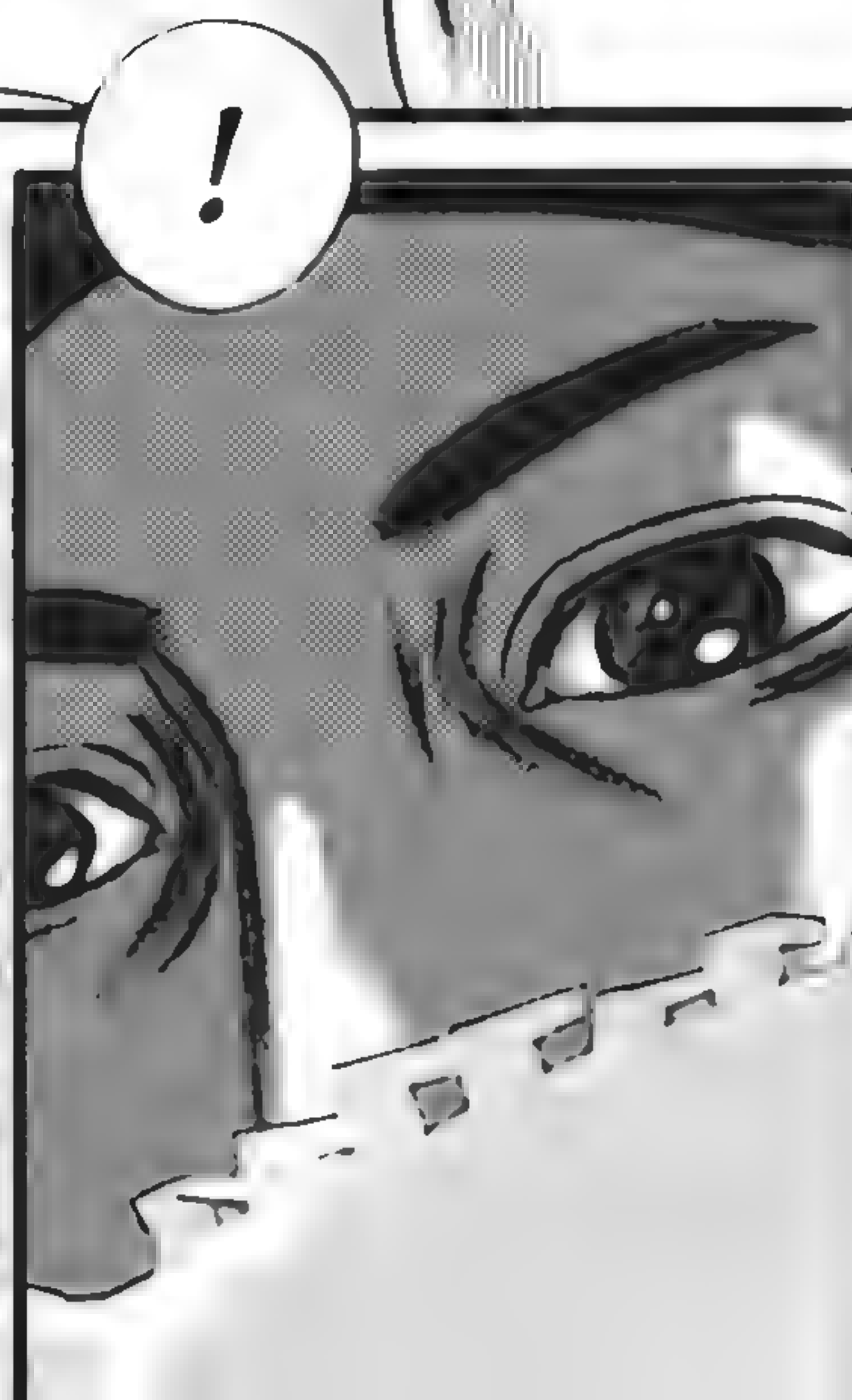
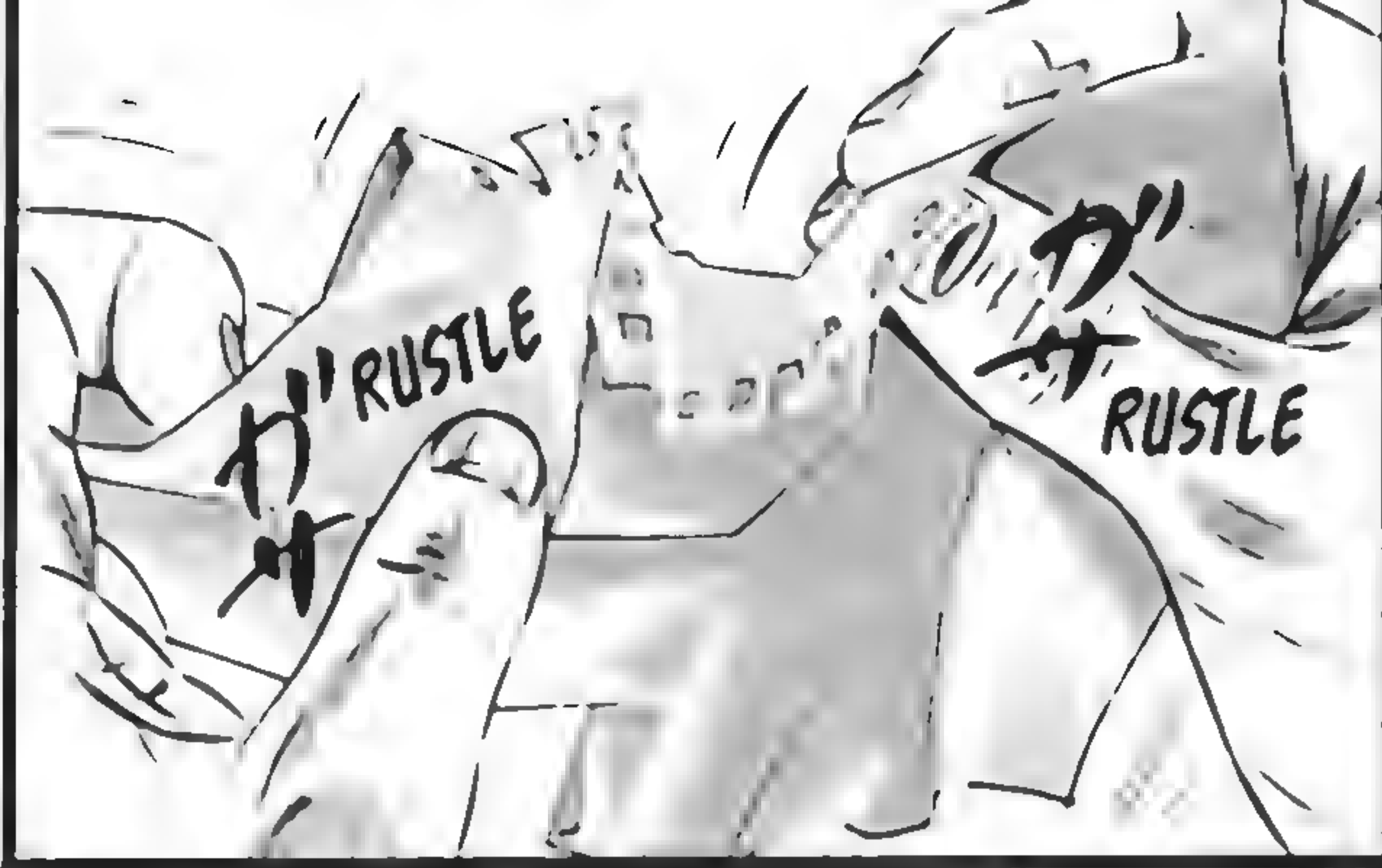
Heh heh ...



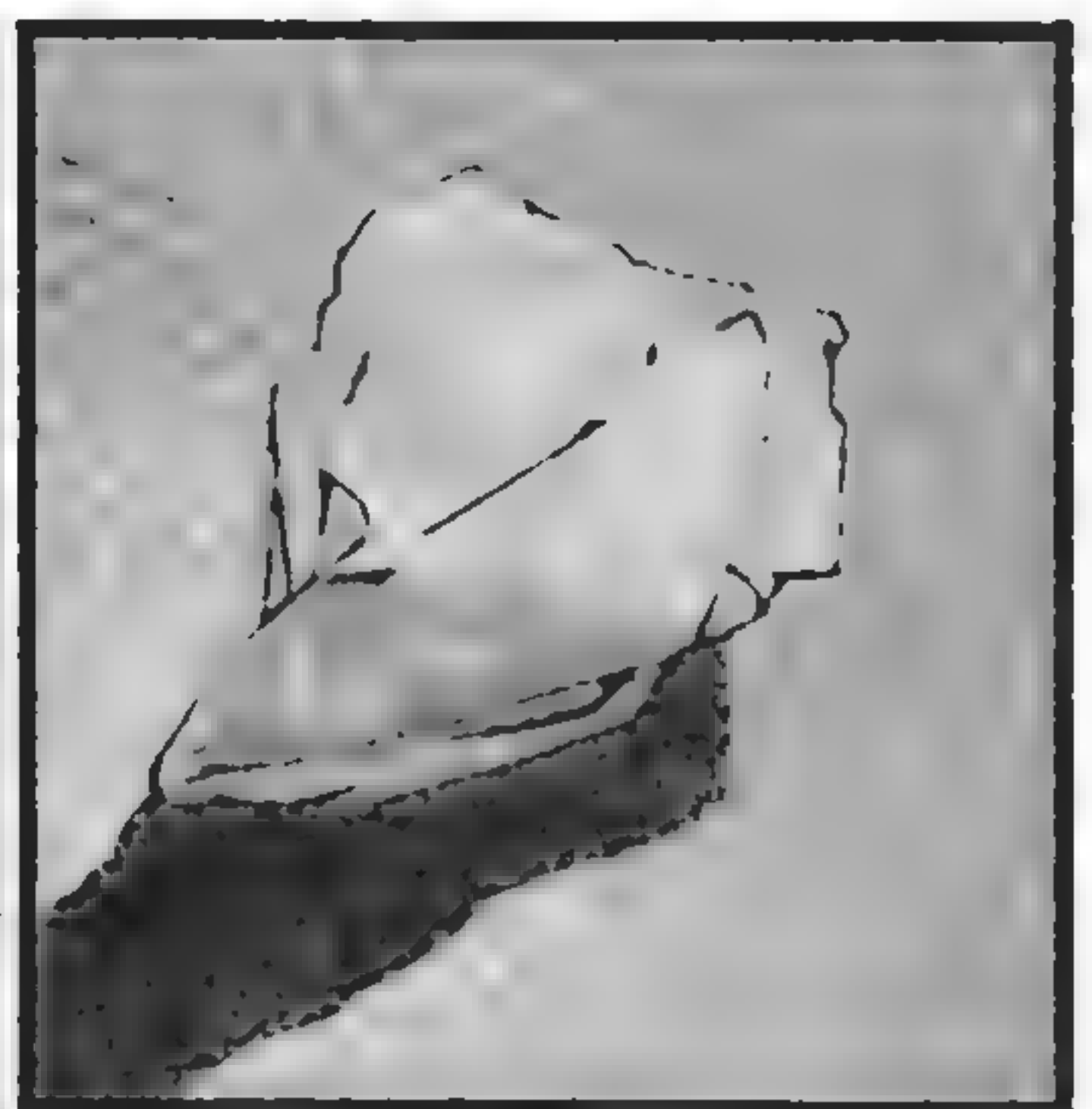




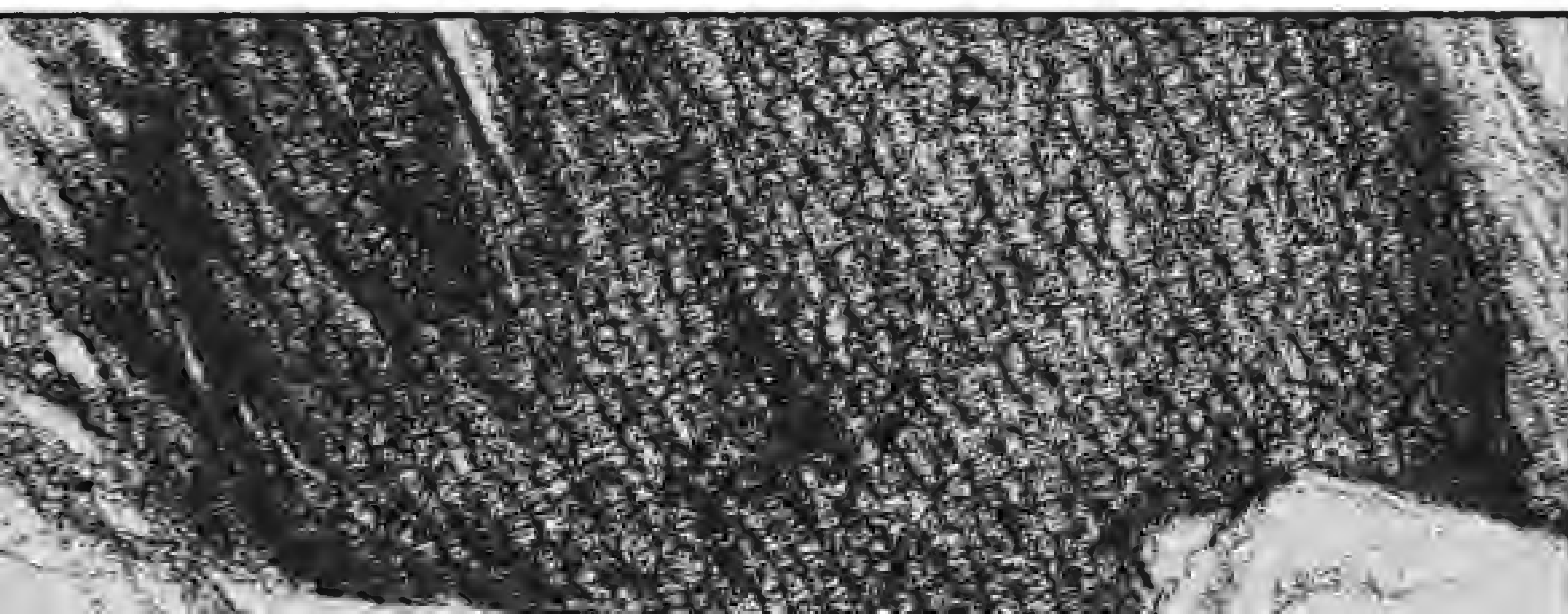




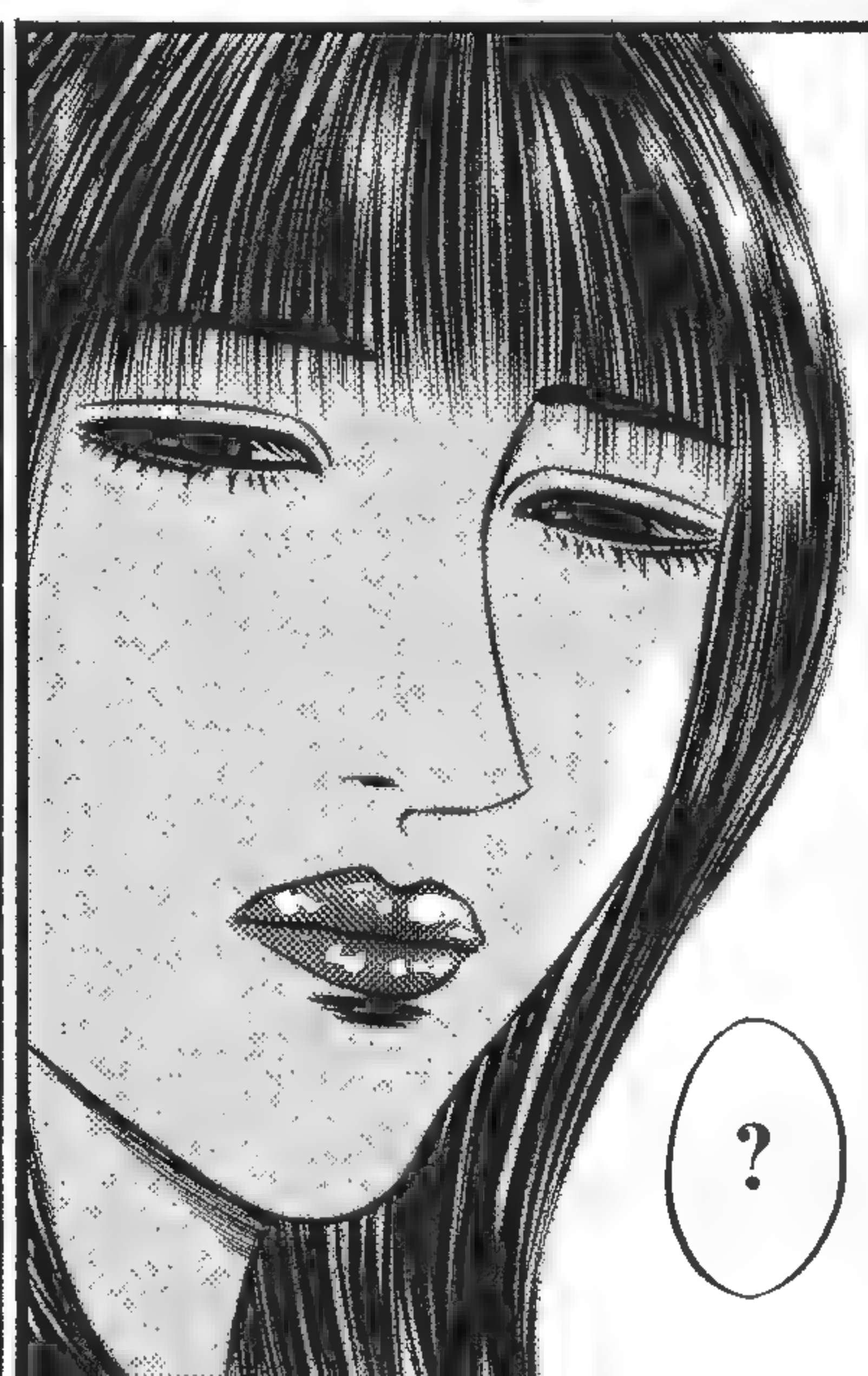
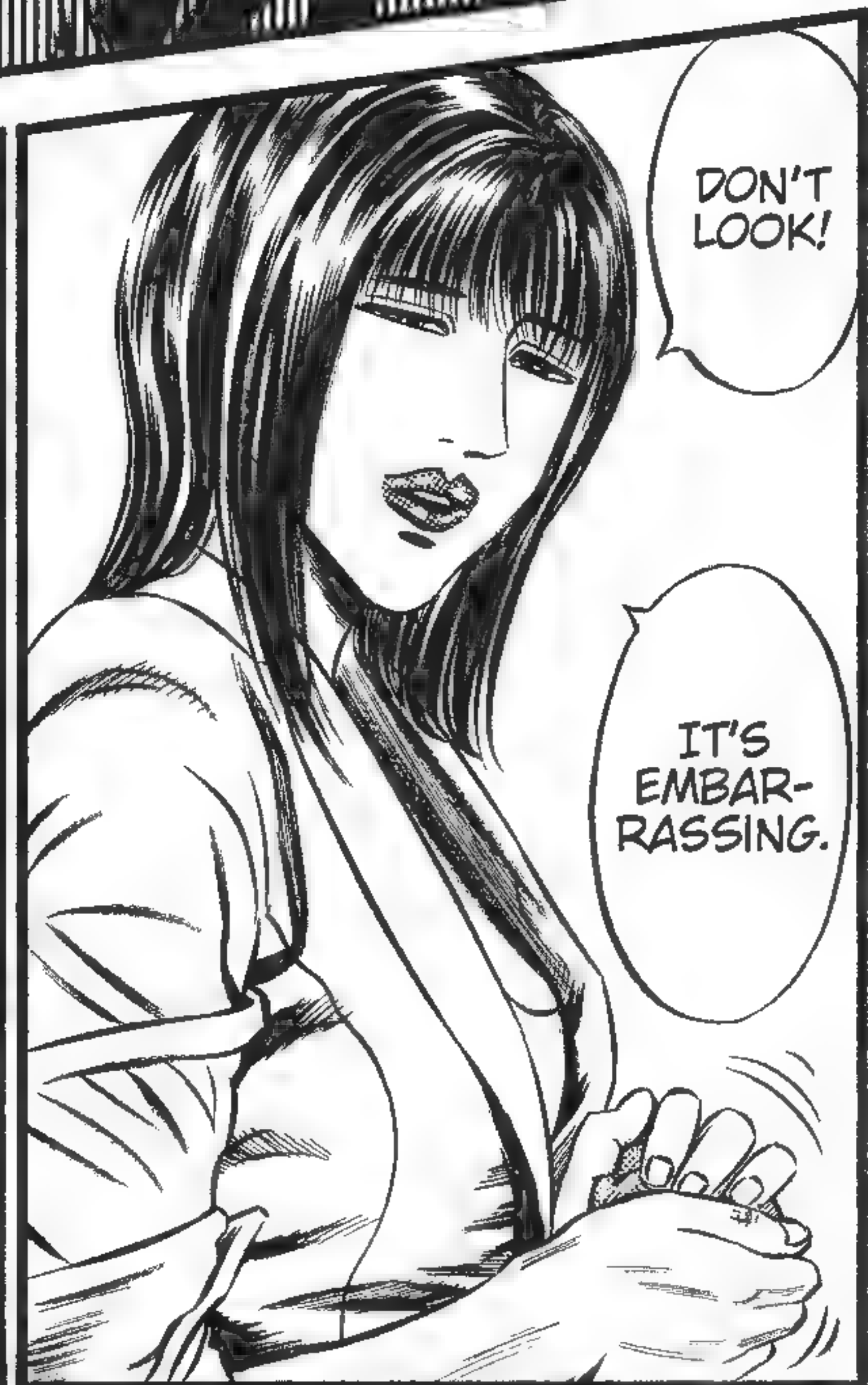


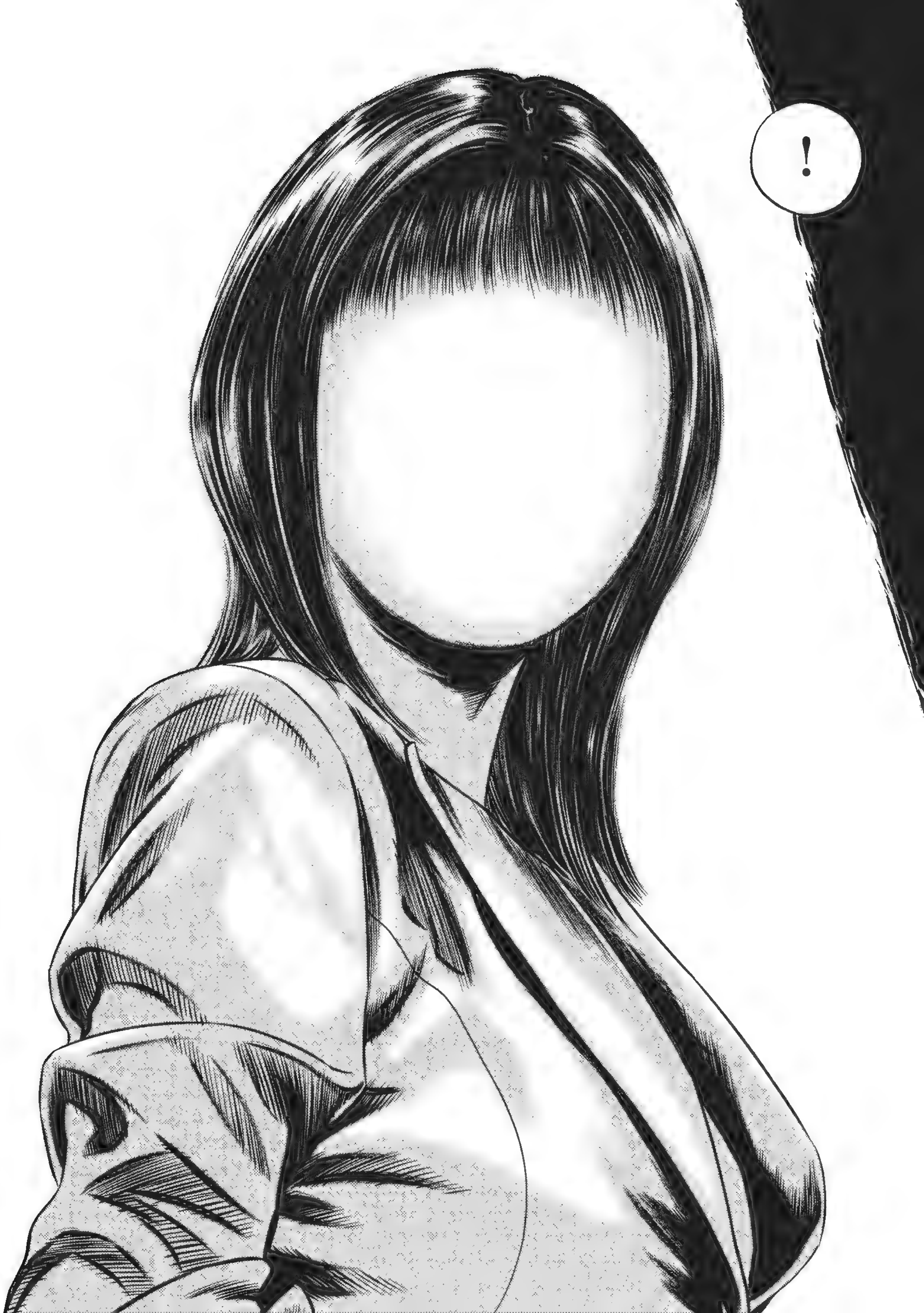








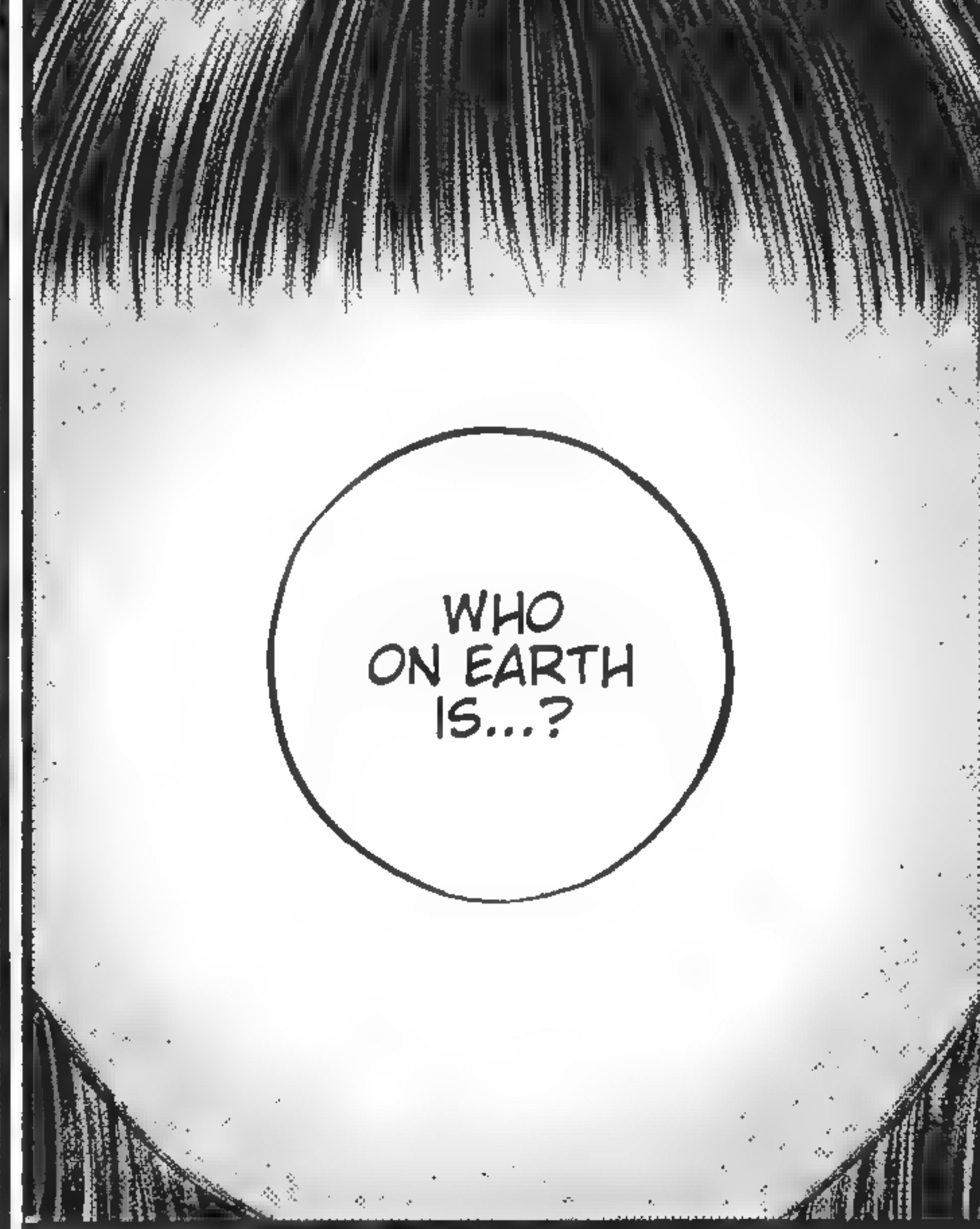






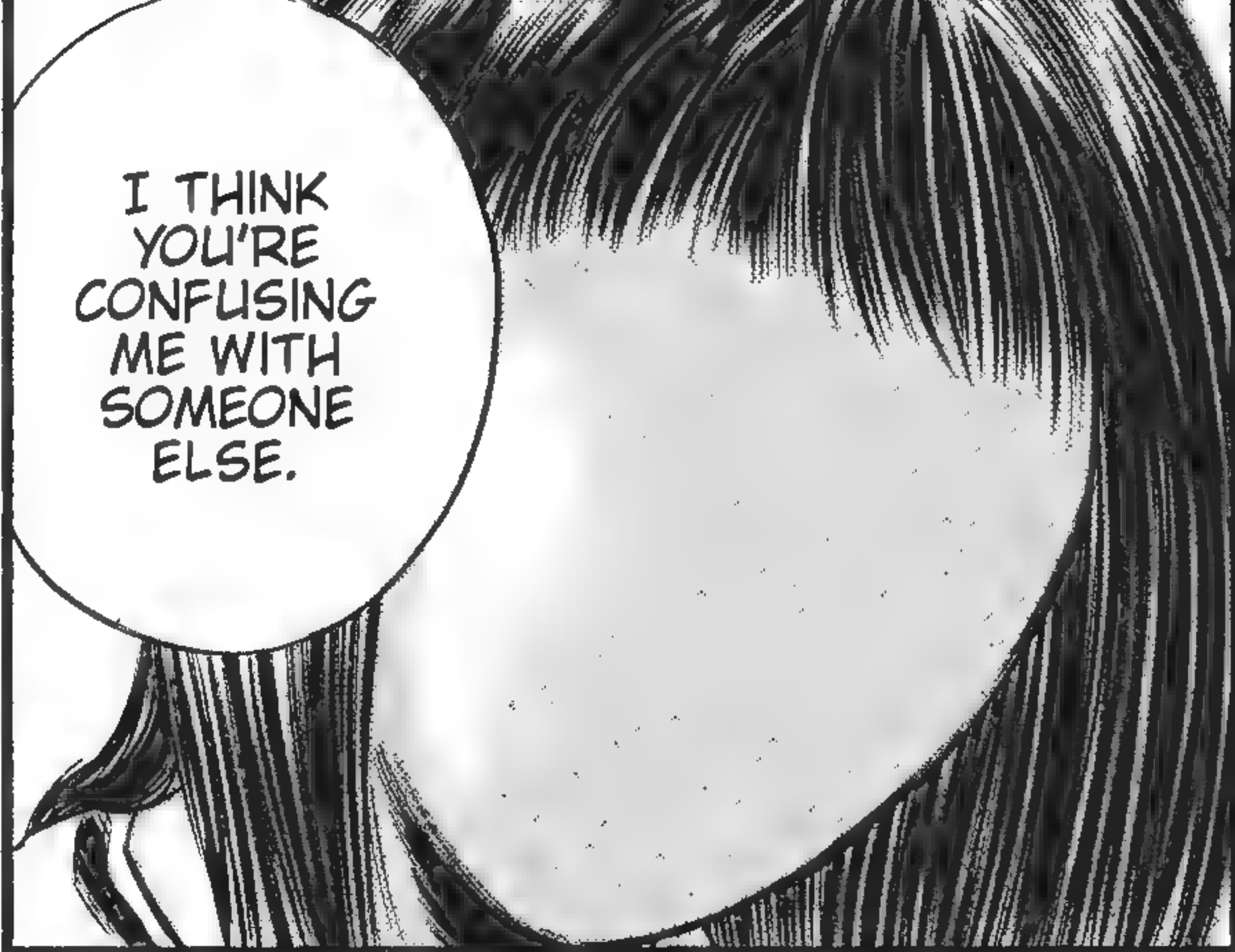
I KNEW
IT.

YOU ARE
NANAKO,
AREN'T
YOU?

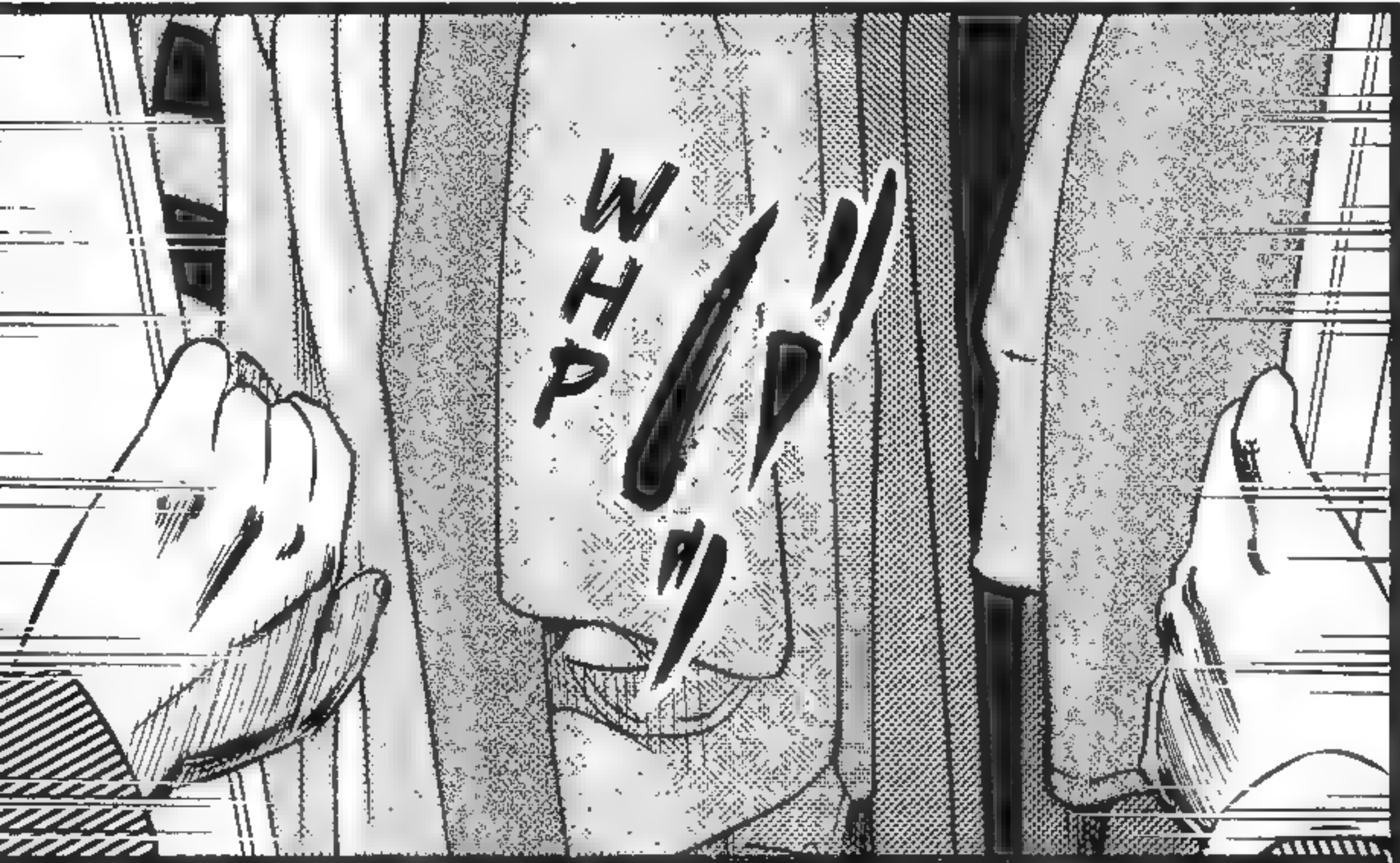




.....



I THINK
YOU'RE
CONFUSING
ME WITH
SOMEONE
ELSE.



W
H
P



H-HEY!
STOP
THAT!



!

GA-
CHK

HERE, I
KNOW!



BESIDES,
THERE'S
NOTHING IN
THERE!



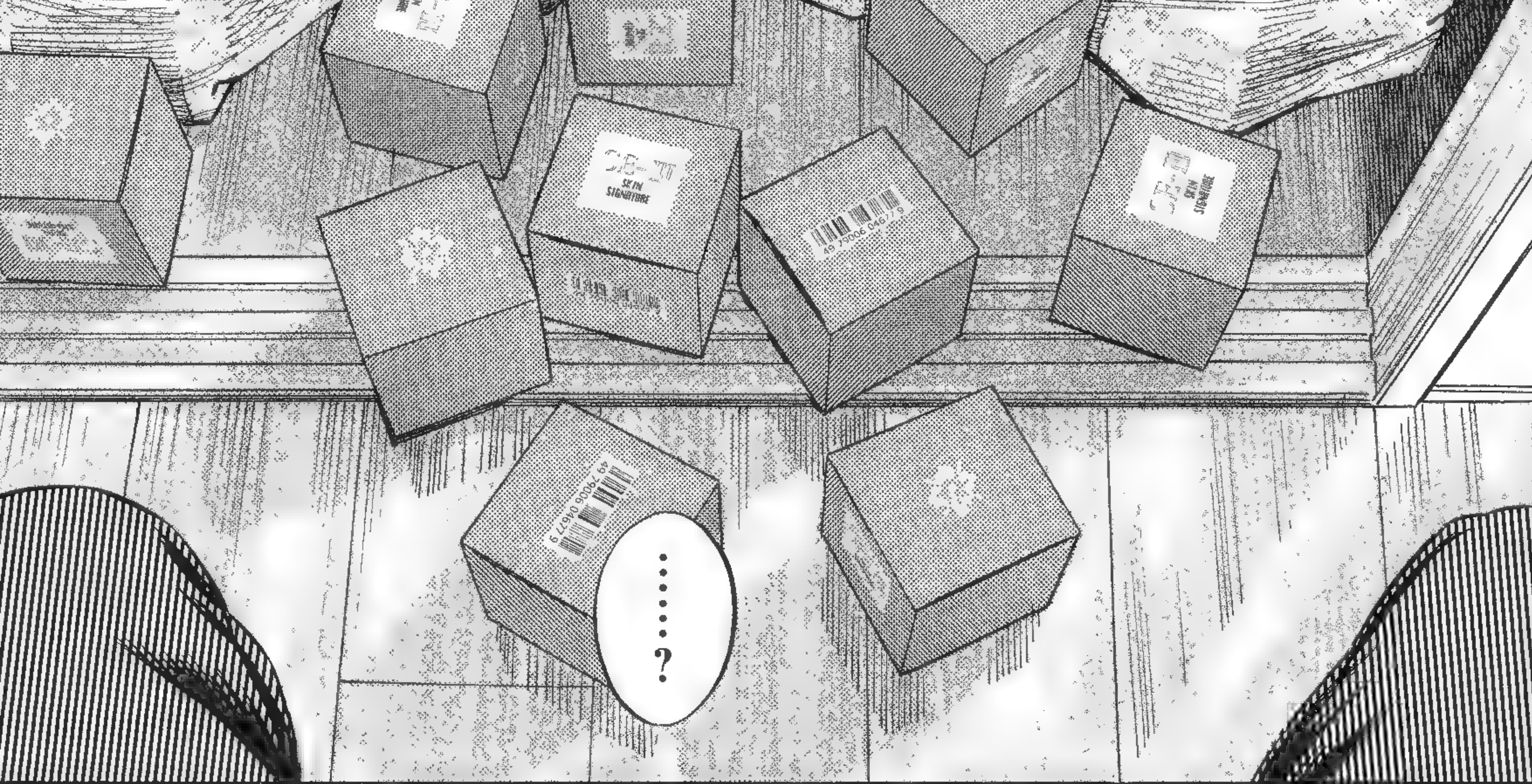
YOU CAN'T
JUST GO
THROUGH MY
THINGS LIKE
THAT!

YOUR OLD
DRAWINGS
OF ME MUST
BE HERE
SOMEWHERE.

RUMMAGE

RUMMAGE







I BOUGHT
A BIT TOO
MUCH,
THAT'S
ALL.

IT'S
JUST
EXTRA.



WHY...

DO YOU
HAVE SO
MUCH OF
THE SAME
THING?



HOW I
SPEND MY
MONEY
IS NONE
OF YOUR
CONCERN.

.....



DO YOU...
OFTEN BUY
THINGS
YOU DON'T
NEED?



.....

SO
THEN...

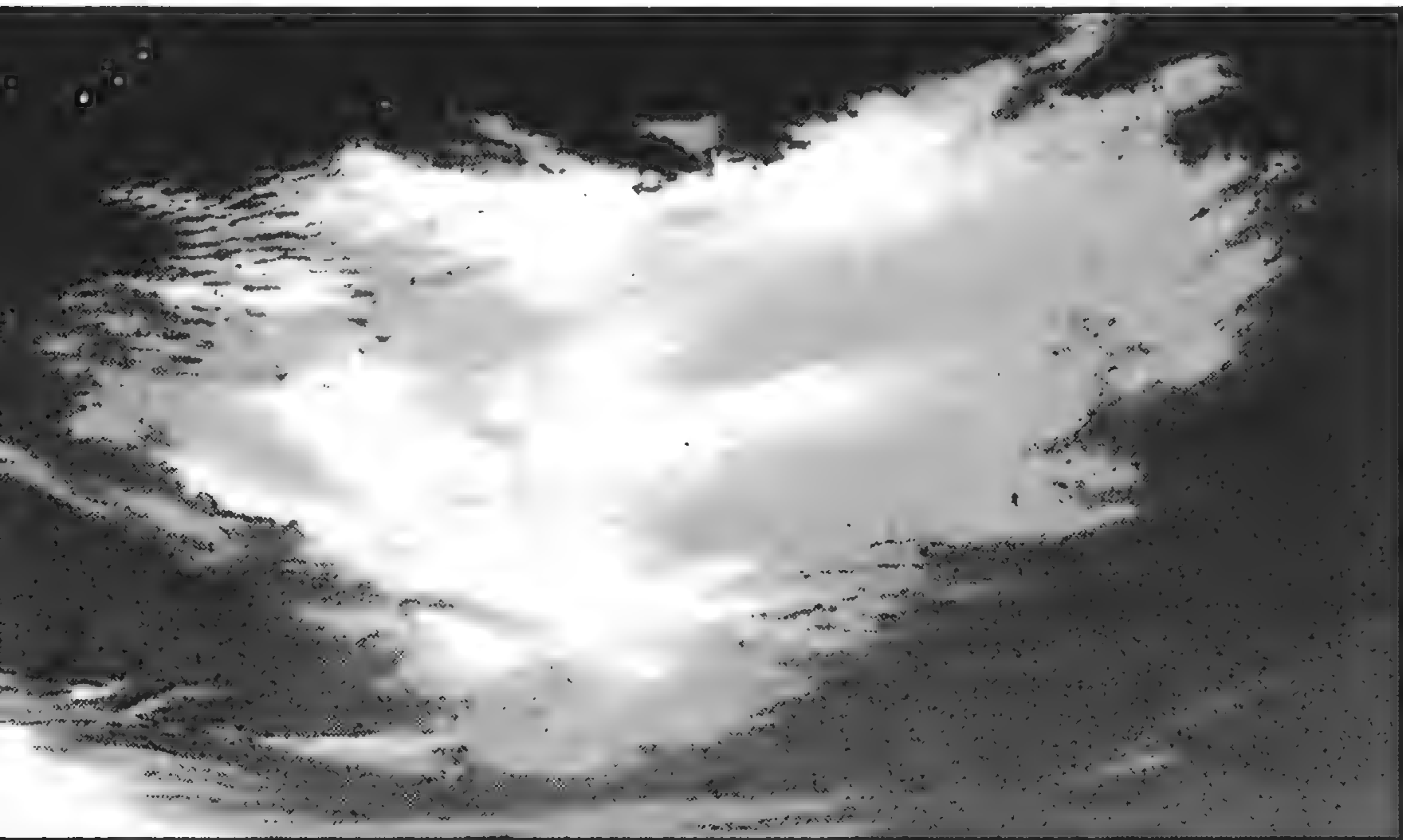
WHERE
ARE YOUR
DRAWINGS?



WILL YOU
JUST GO
HOME
ALREADY?









Graffiti: Naoto was here

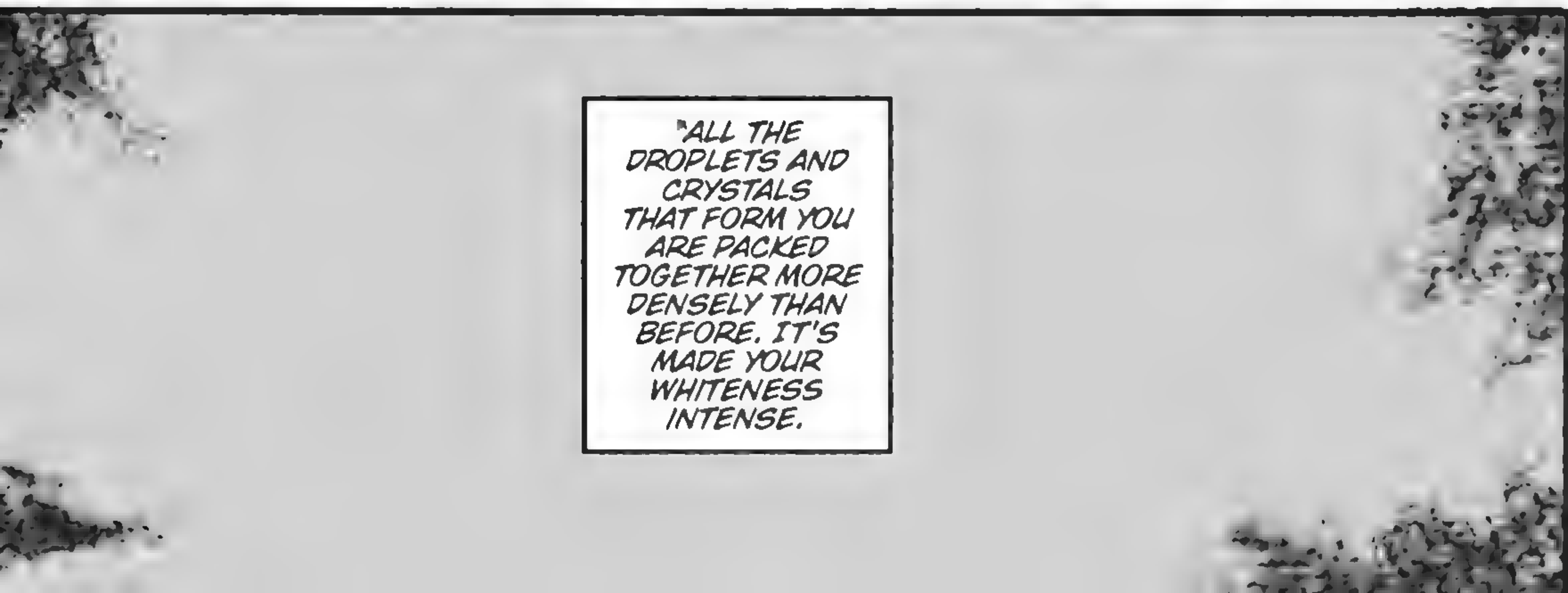




"IT'S
LIKE
YOU'RE
WORKING
UP THE
COURAGE
TO DO
SOME-
THING
HUGE.



"YOUR
CLOUD IS
DIFFERENT
TODAY,
NAKOSHI-
SAN.
ARE YOU
FEELING
TENSE?



"ALL THE
DROPLETS AND
CRYSTALS
THAT FORM YOU
ARE PACKED
TOGETHER MORE
DENSELY THAN
BEFORE. IT'S
MADE YOUR
WHITENESS
INTENSE.



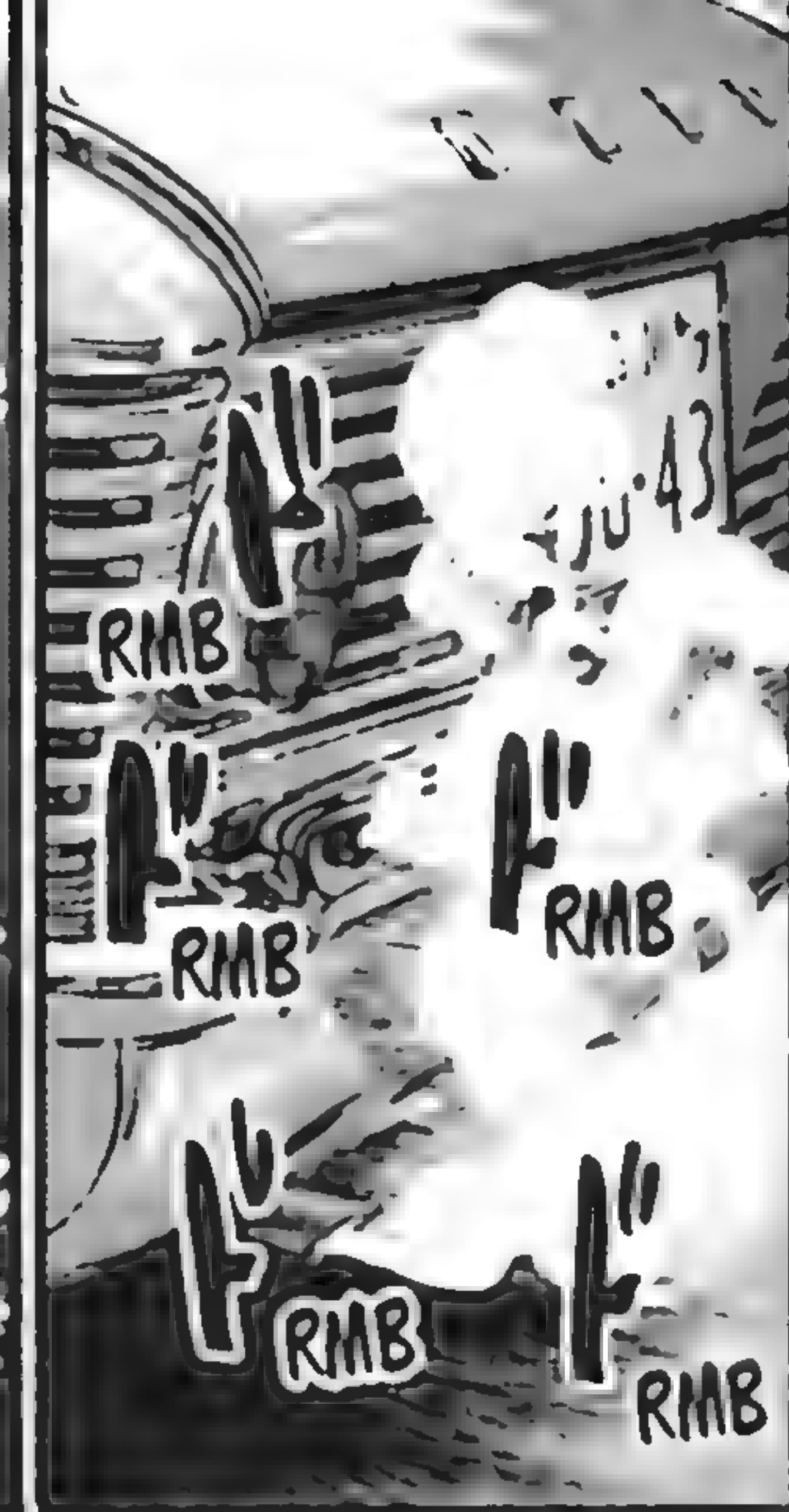
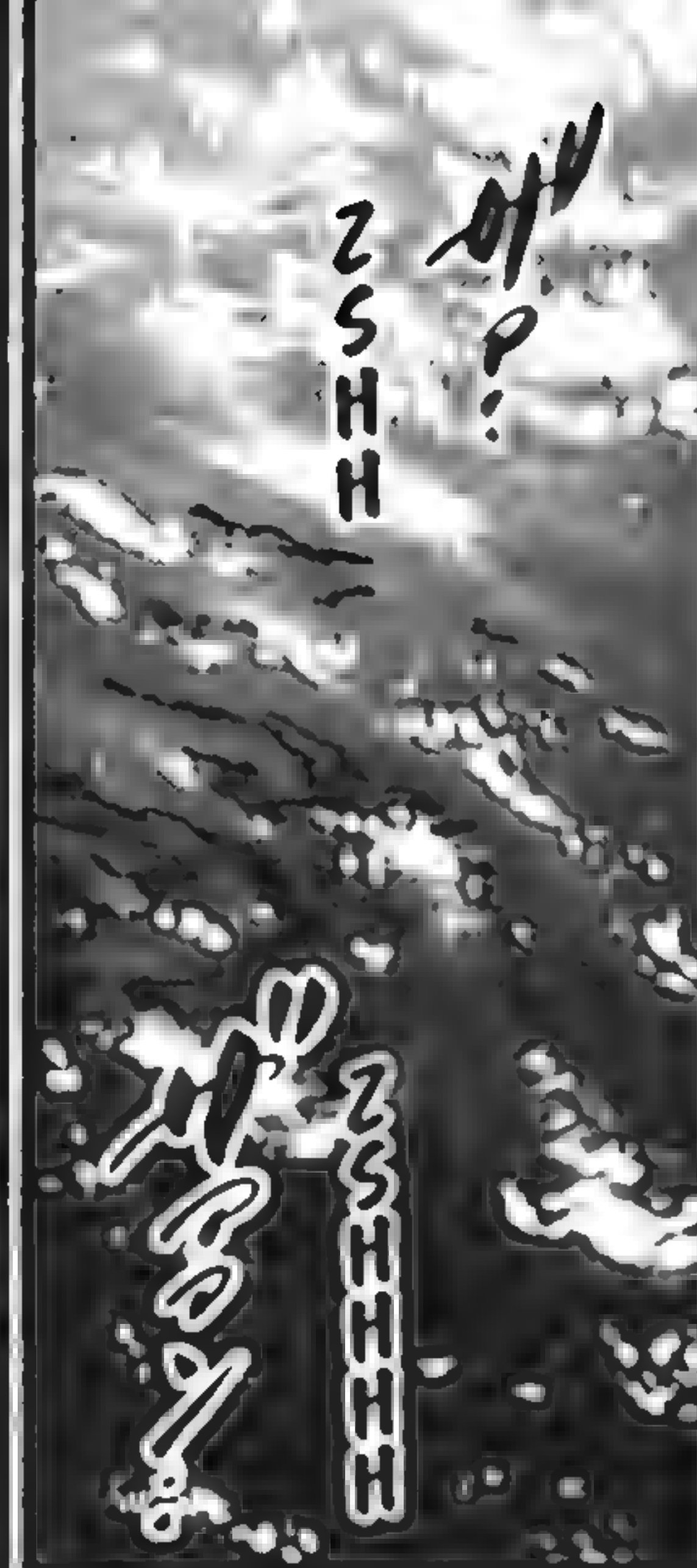
"IT'S SO
BEAUTIFUL."

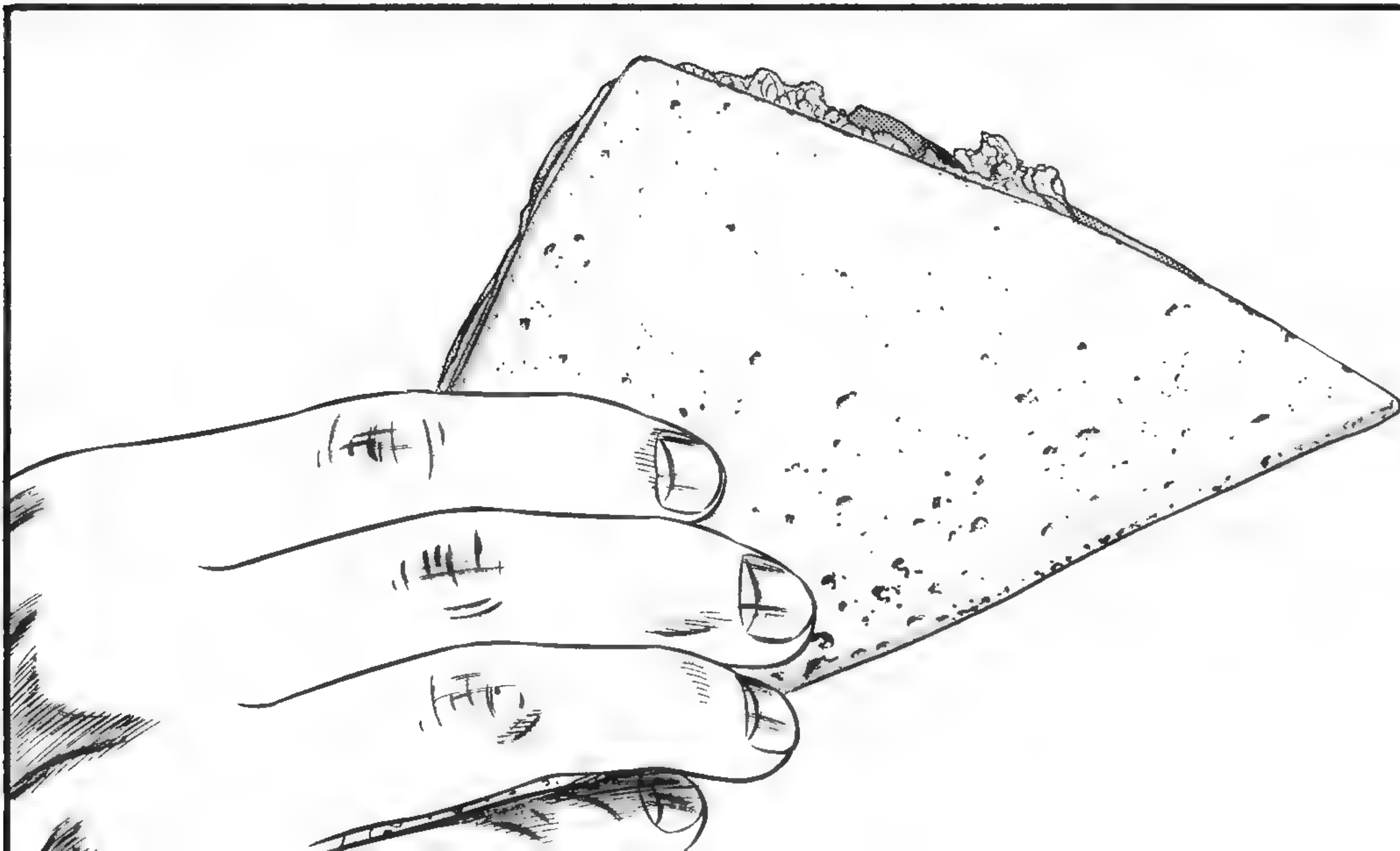
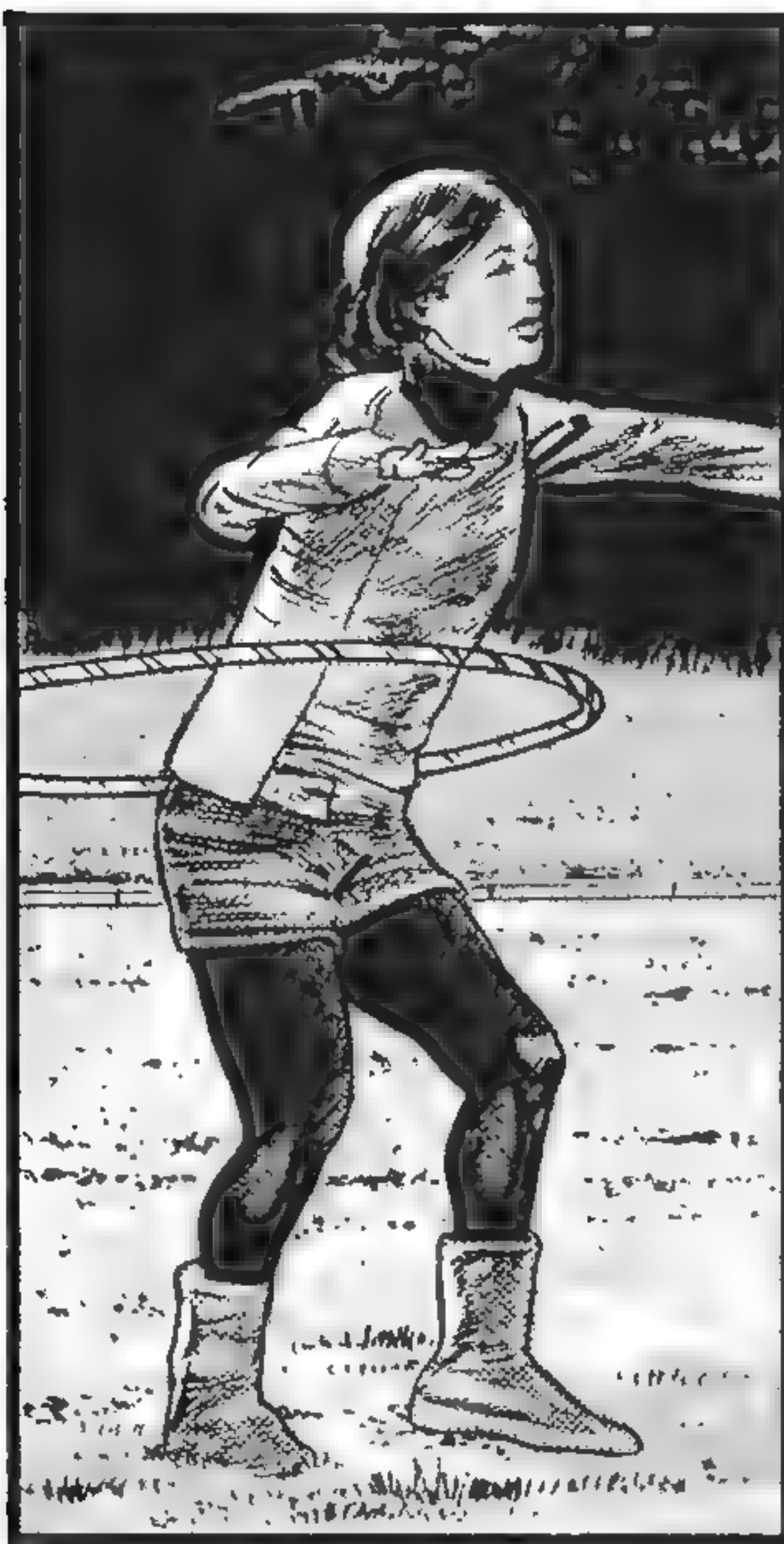
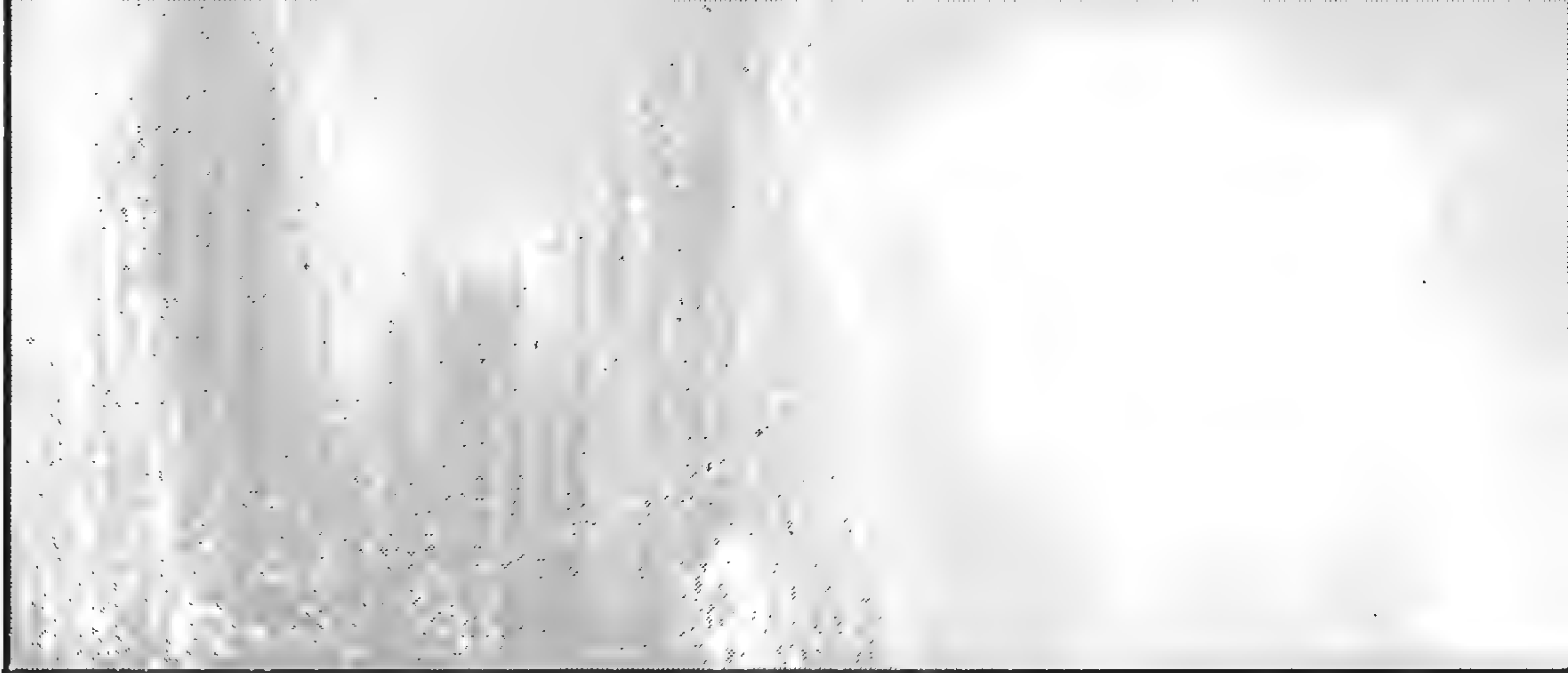


"HUH
?!"

"THANK
YOU."









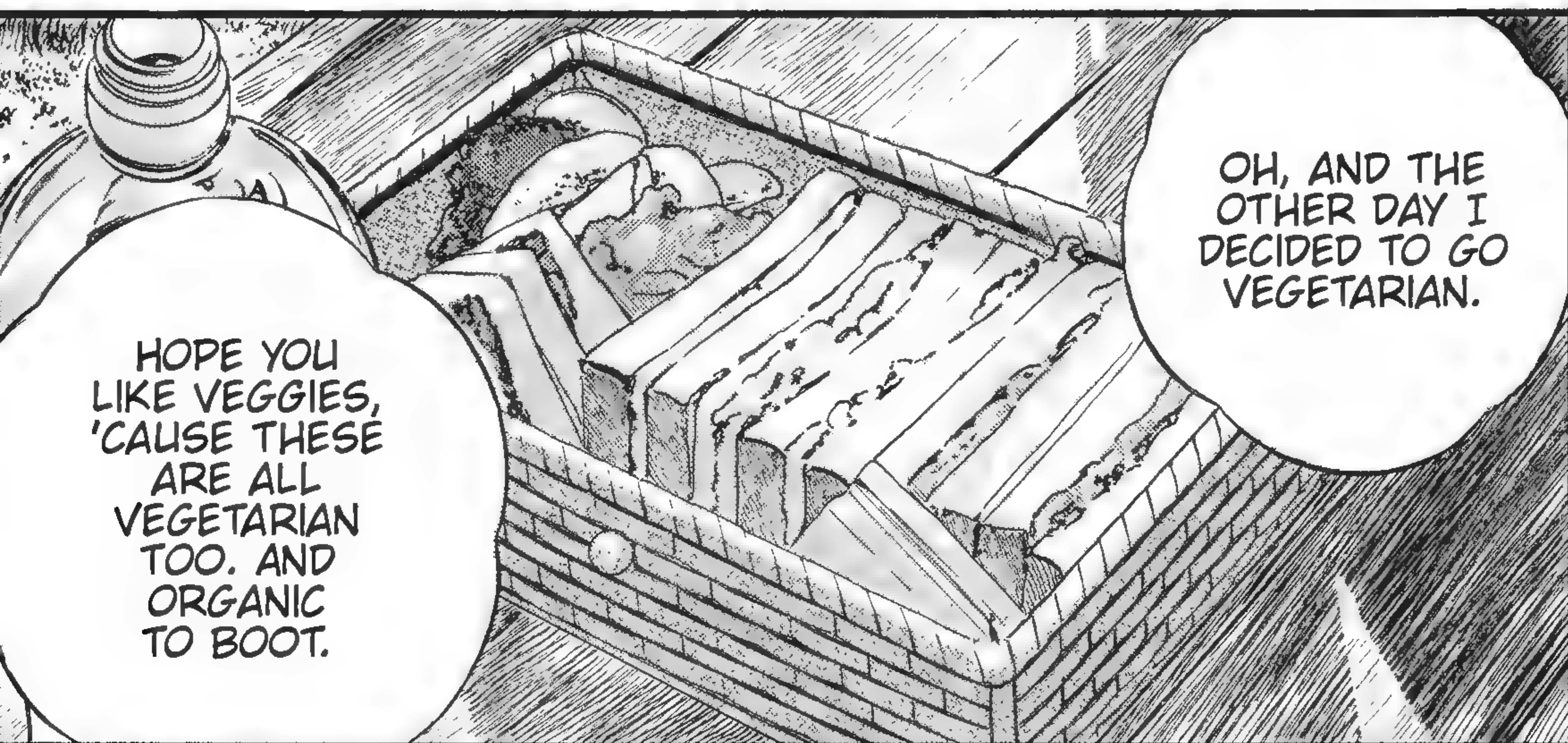
IT'S GOOD.

THANKS!
MADE IT
MYSELF,
IN FACT.

WOW.
WHERE'D
YOU BUY
THIS?



HOMF!



HOPE YOU
LIKE VEGGIES,
'CAUSE THESE
ARE ALL
VEGETARIAN
TOO. AND
ORGANIC
TO BOOT.

OH, AND THE
OTHER DAY I
DECIDED TO GO
VEGETARIAN.



.....



HUH?!

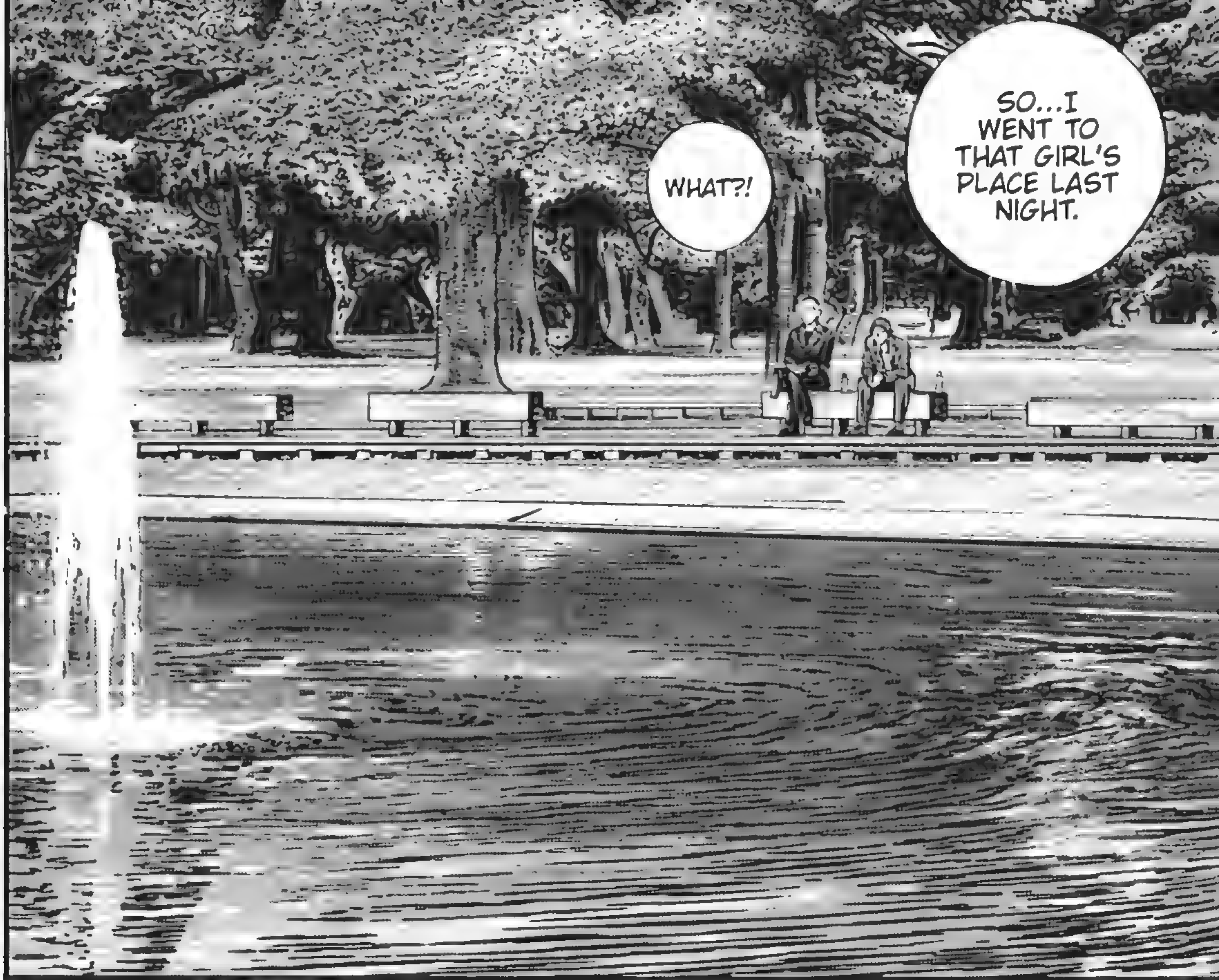
HUNH.

ACTUALLY,
YOU DO LOOK
THINNER.



DO I?!
HEH
HEH...

D...



WHAT?!

SO...I
WENT TO
THAT GIRL'S
PLACE LAST
NIGHT.



!



BUT...
I DID FINALLY
REMEMBER WHAT
WENT DOWN
BETWEEN US.
ALL OF IT.



DID
YOU...
DO IT?

DID...



NO,
MORON.



SO...YOU
GONNA SHARE
THE DIRTY
DEETS?



AND
WOULDN'T
LET ME
DO A
THING.

SHE CAME
UP TO MY
HOTEL
ROOM...



REALLY?
WEIRD.



NO. 'CAUSE
THERE
AREN'T ANY.
I NEVER
TOUCHED
HER.



SHE
DREW
YOU...

WHILE
YOU
SLEPT
...?



!

I FOUND THIS
DRAWING ON
THE GROUND.
IT WAS OF ME,
SLEEPING.

BUT WHEN
I WOKE THE
NEXT DAY...

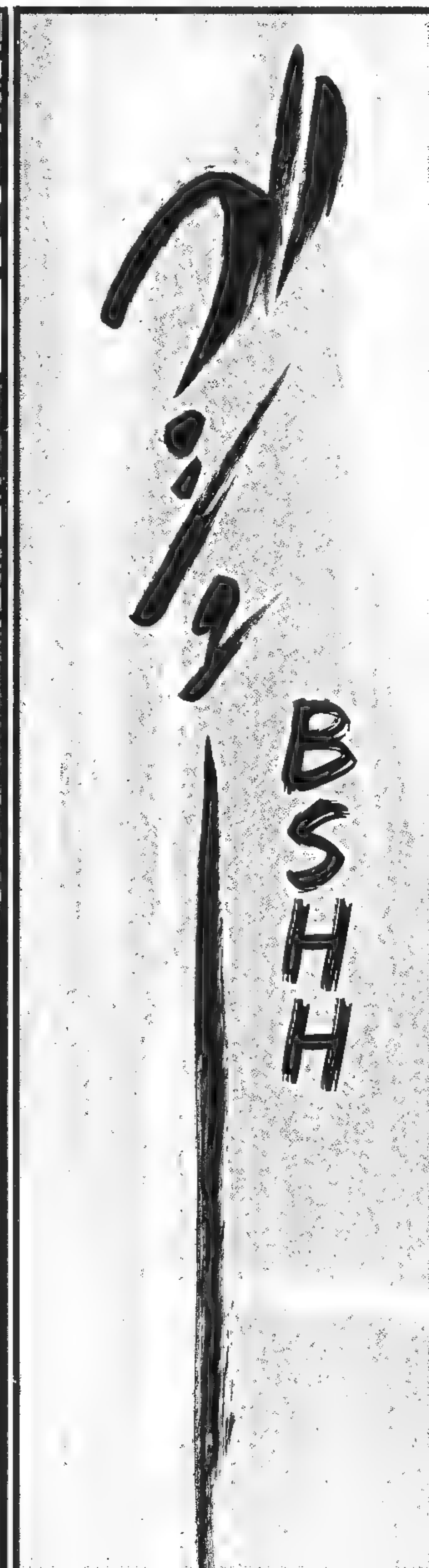


YEAH.
AND MY
FACE WAS
BLACKED
OUT.

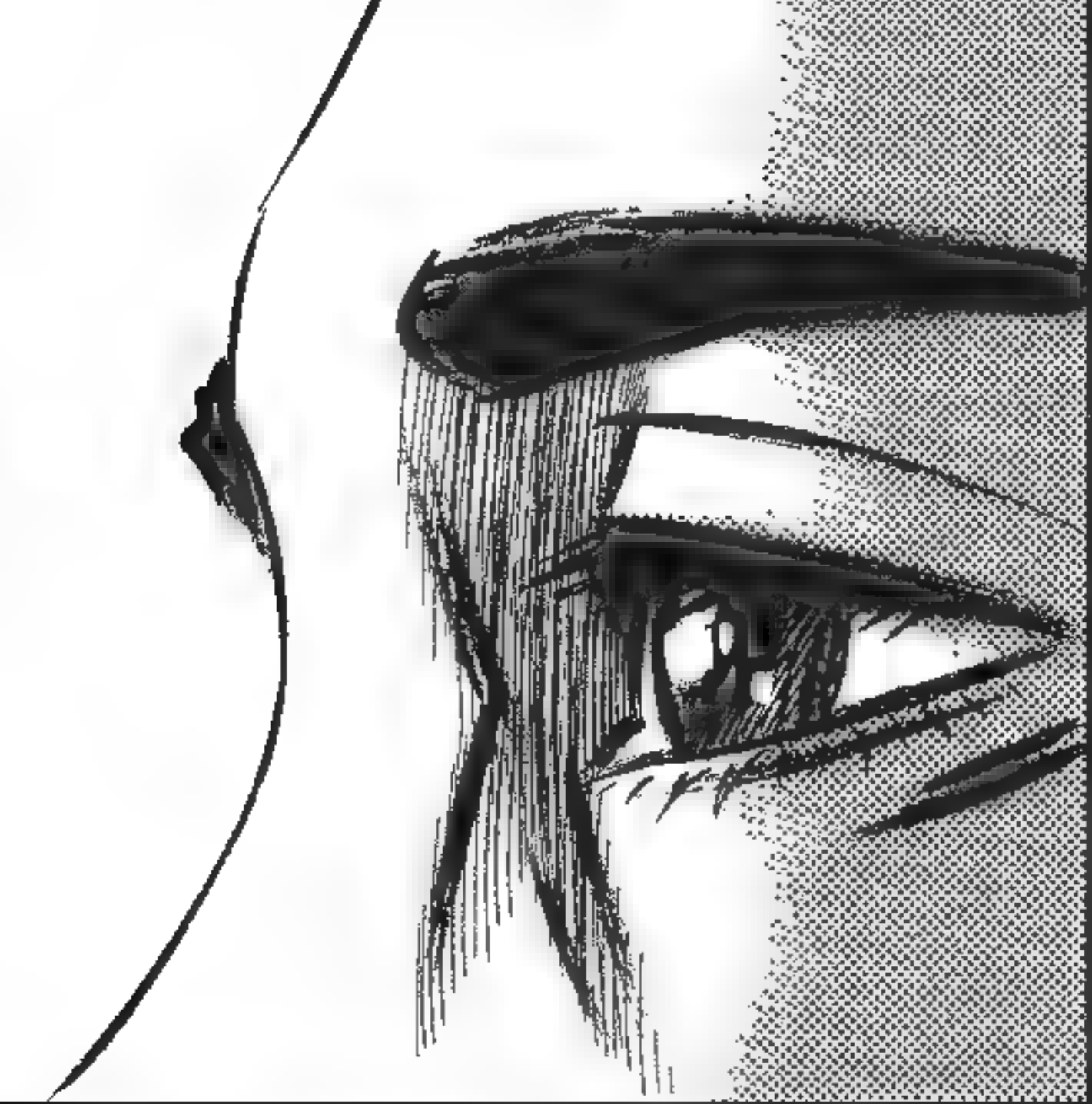
I WAS A
FACELESS
MONSTER.



A BLACKED-
OUT FACELESS
MONSTER...?



BSHHH



NO ONE
ELSE WOULD
DRAW SOME-
THING LIKE
THAT.

SHE'S
GOTTA BE
NANAKO.

IT HAS
TO BE
HER!

I THOUGHT
THIS
NANAKO
GIRL SAW
YOU AS A
CLOUD!

BUT,
NAKOSHI-
SAN...

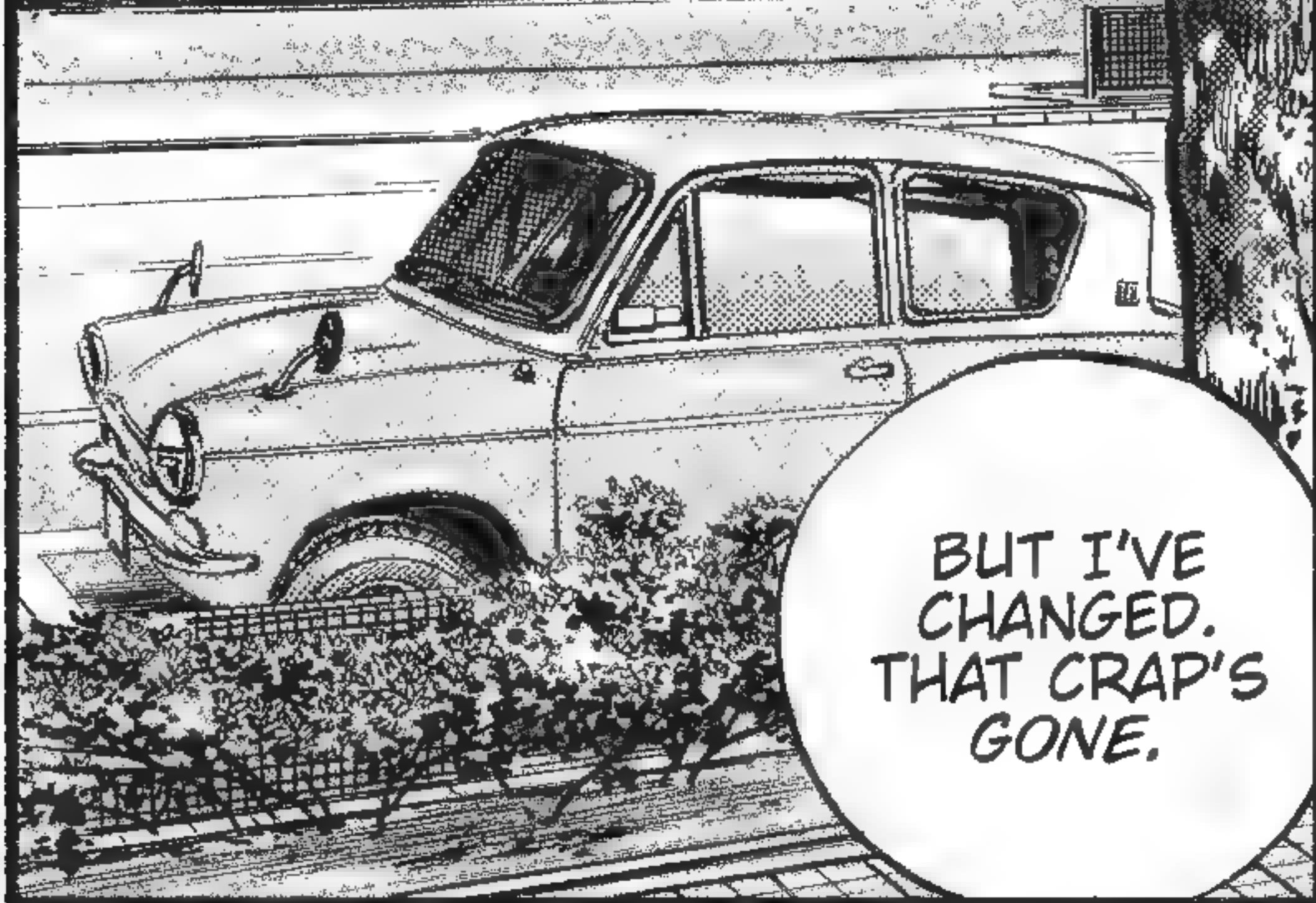
BUT THE ONLY
DIFFERENCE
IS THAT IT'S
BLACK-ON-
WHITE NOW, NOT
THE OTHER WAY
AROUND.

I DON'T
KNOW WHY
SHE CHANGED
HER STYLE...

THE
SUBJECT
MATTER...
THAT'S ALL
NANAKO.

ISN'T
IT A BIT
EARLY
TO SAY
THAT FOR
SURE?

HOLD
UP.



BUT I'VE
CHANGED.
THAT CRAP'S
GONE.

BEFORE THE
FACELIFT, SURE. BUT
THE NIGHT SHE CAME
TO MY ROOM, I HAD
A NEW FACE. I WAS
DROWNING MYSELF
IN POINTLESS
SYMBOLS. I WAS
NO CLOUD THEN.



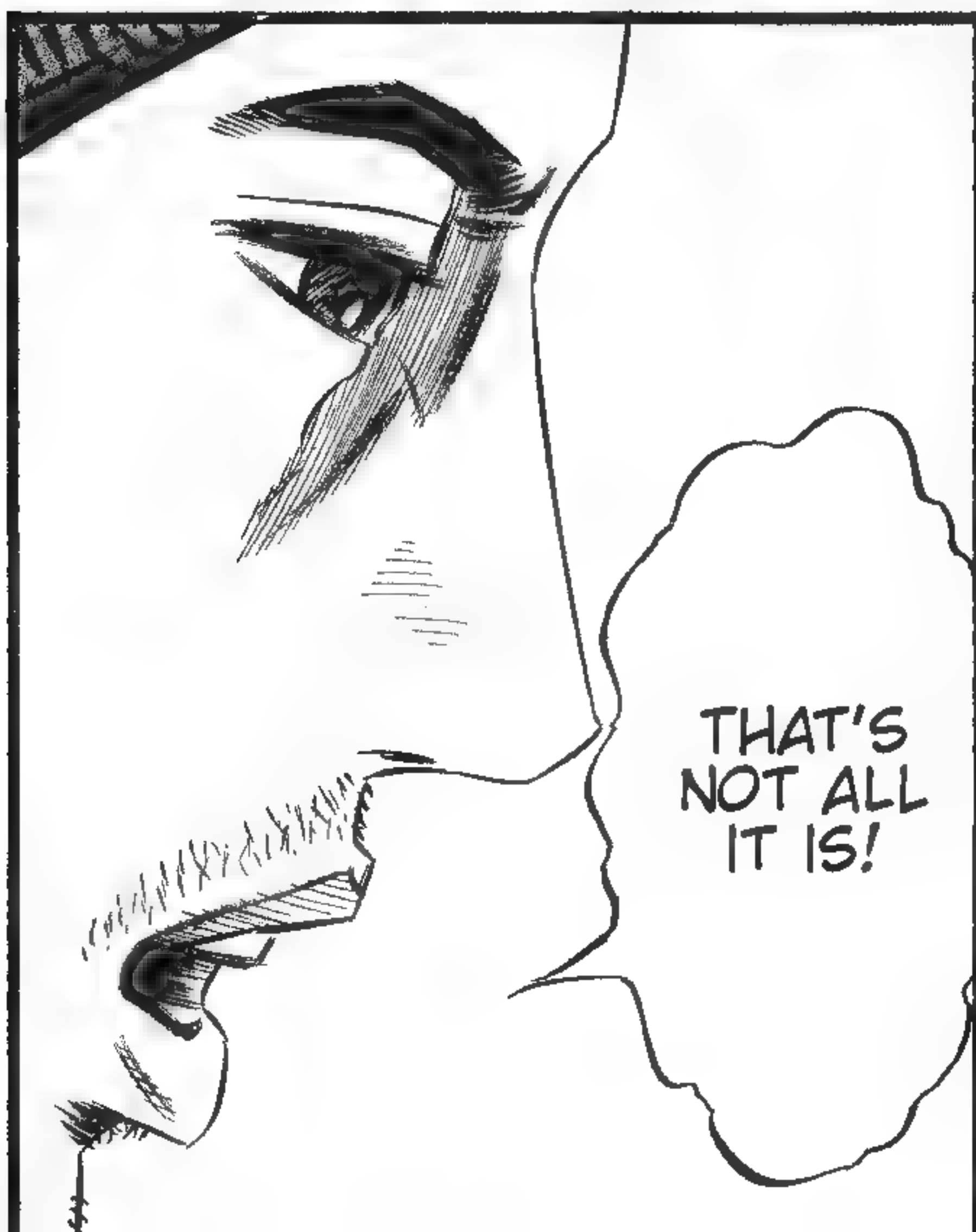
THAT MUST BE
WHY SHE KEEPS
CHASING AFTER
ME!



YOU...

LOOK LIKE
A CLOUD
AGAIN?

SO SHE'S
TRYING TO
GET BACK
INTO YOUR
LIFE NOW
BECAUSE...

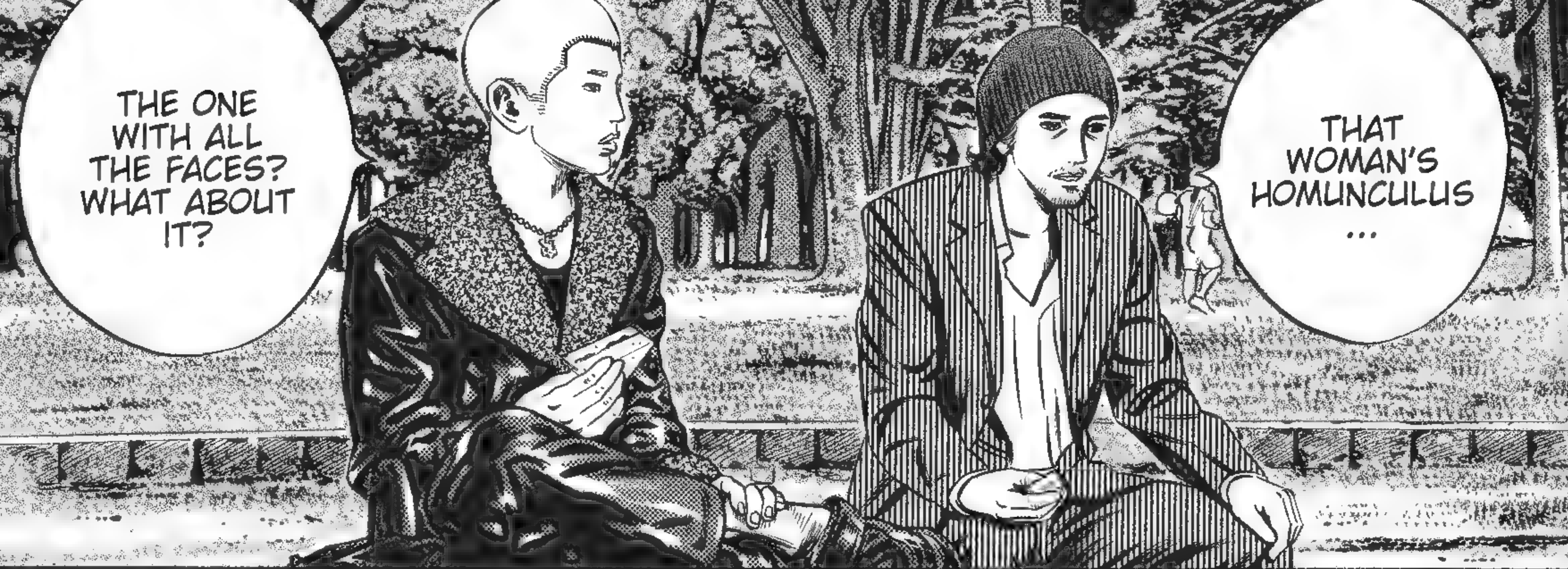


THAT'S
NOT ALL
IT IS!

THAT'S
OBVIOUSLY
JUST WHAT
YOU WISH WAS
HAPPENING!
YOU'RE
PROJECTING
YOUR OWN
DESIRES
ON HER!

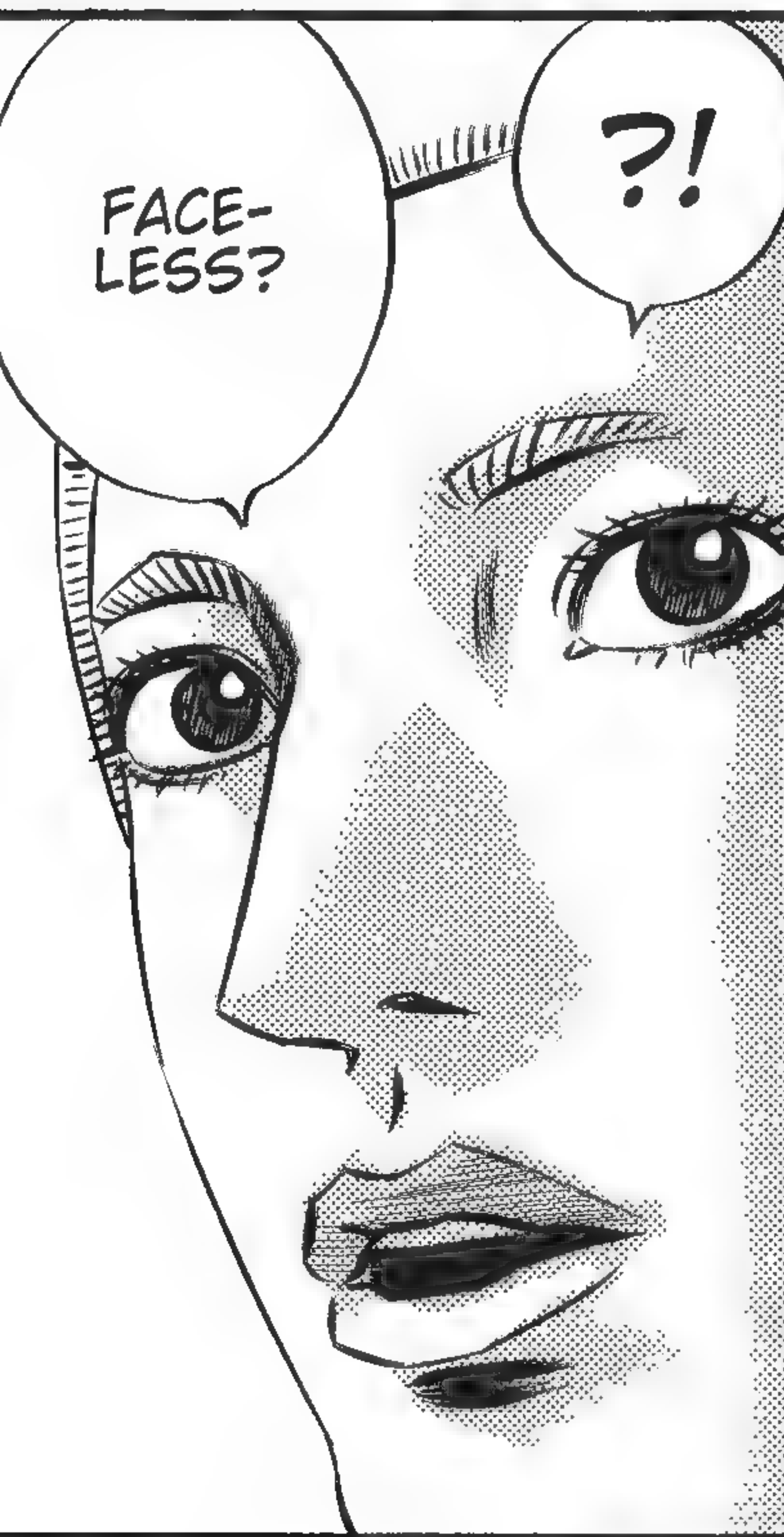


NAKOSHI-
SAN,
COME ON!



THE ONE
WITH ALL
THE FACES?
WHAT ABOUT
IT?

THAT
WOMAN'S
HOMUNCULUS
...

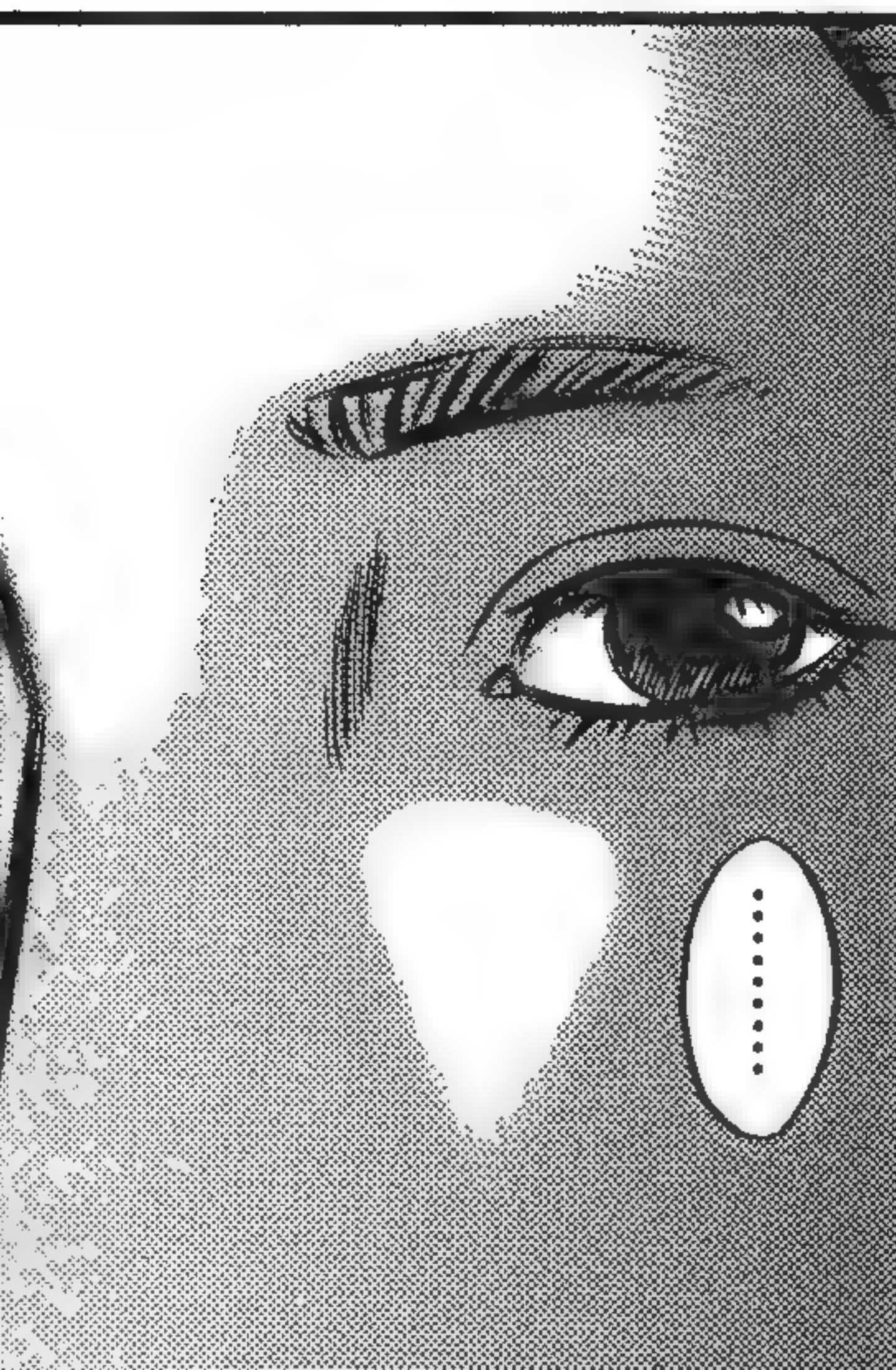


FACE-
LESS?

?!



SOMETIMES...
IT'S
FACELESS.



AND THAT'S
HOW SHE IS IN
MY DREAMS.
ALWAYS...
FACELESS.

I'VE BEEN
DREAMING
ABOUT HER A
LOT LATELY.
ABOUT
NANAKO.



YOU FORGET
YOUR EX-GIRL-
FRIEND'S FACE,
SO SHE SHOWS
UP FACELESS IN
YOUR DREAMS.

WELL, IT'S
OBVIOUS
WHAT THAT
SYMBOLIZES.



I
GUESS...

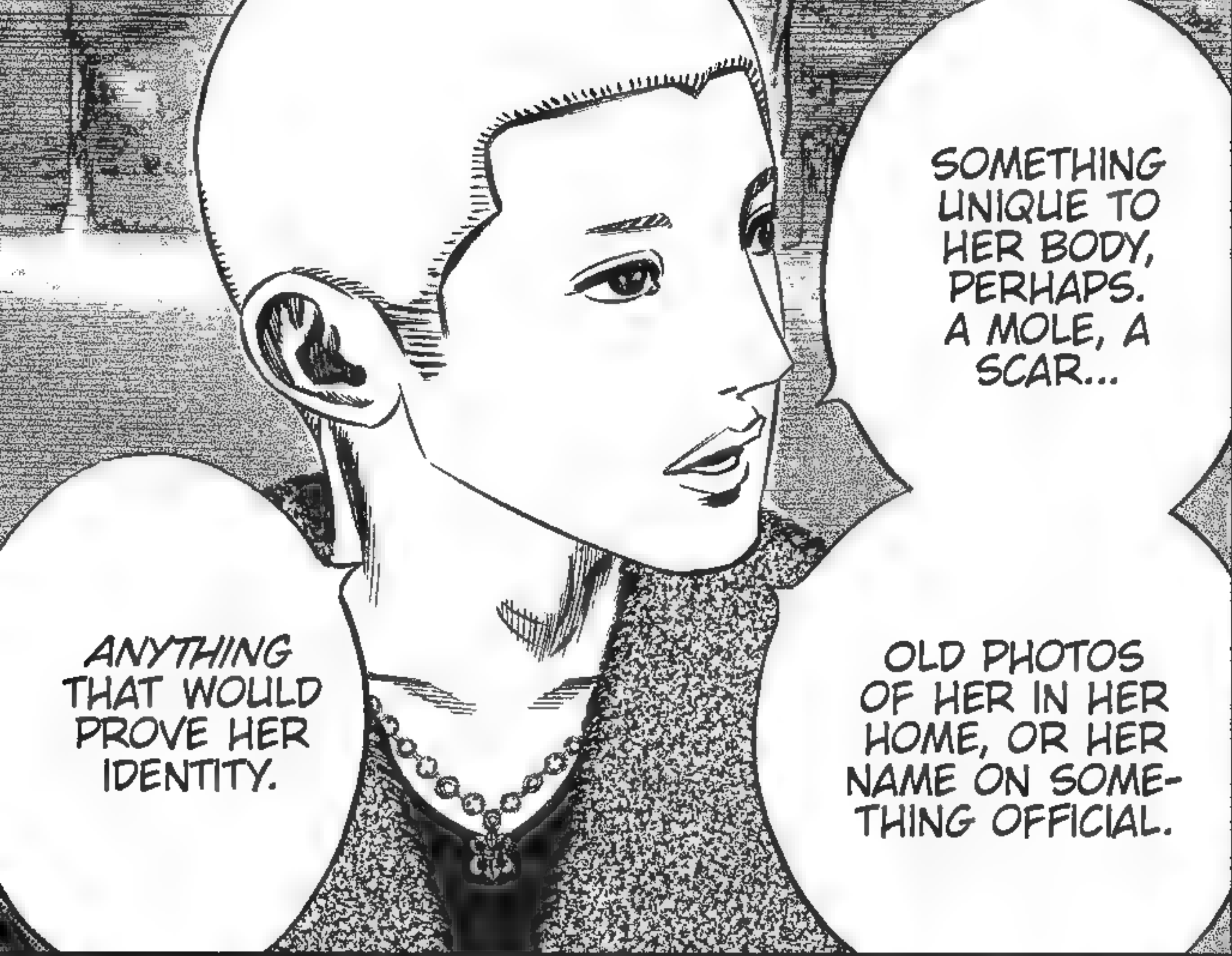


SINCE
SHE'S
ANOTHER
GIRL YOU
FORGOT
AND ALL.

AND THAT'S
WHY *THIS*
WOMAN'S
HOMUNCULUS
LOOKS
FACELESS
TOO.



IMAGINATIONS
ARE FUELED BY ALL
MANNER OF BIASED
HOPES AND DREAMS.
YOU'RE LETTING
YOURS RUN WILD
WITHOUT ALL THE
FACTS AGAIN.

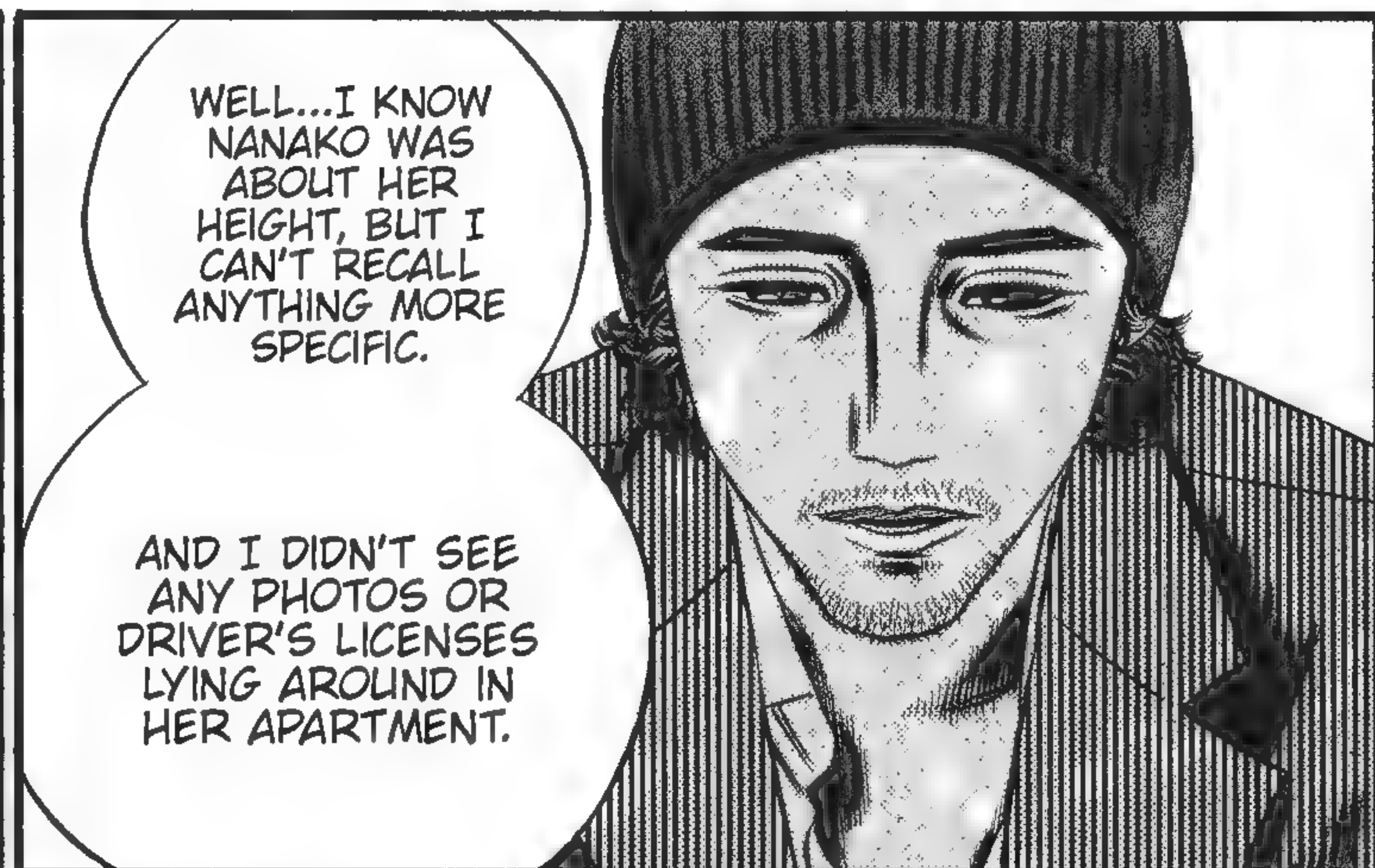


SOMETHING
UNIQUE TO
HER BODY,
PERHAPS.
A MOLE, A
SCAR...

OLD PHOTOS
OF HER IN HER
HOME, OR HER
NAME ON SOME-
THING OFFICIAL.



!



AND I DIDN'T SEE
ANY PHOTOS OR
DRIVER'S LICENSES
LYING AROUND IN
HER APARTMENT.



IT'S FINE IF
YOU CAN'T
RECALL
MUCH.



?



WHEN WE
WERE TOGETHER,
SHE WORKED
PART-TIME AT
A CAFÉ CALLED
MARIMO...

HER NAME
IS NANASE
NANAKO.

SHE'D BE
THIRTY-ONE
RIGHT NOW.

IN
NARIMASU.

SKRITCH

SKRITCH

SKRITCH



THAT'S
ENOUGH
FOR ME.



GOT
IT.

THAT'S...
ABOUT
ALL I
REMEMBER.

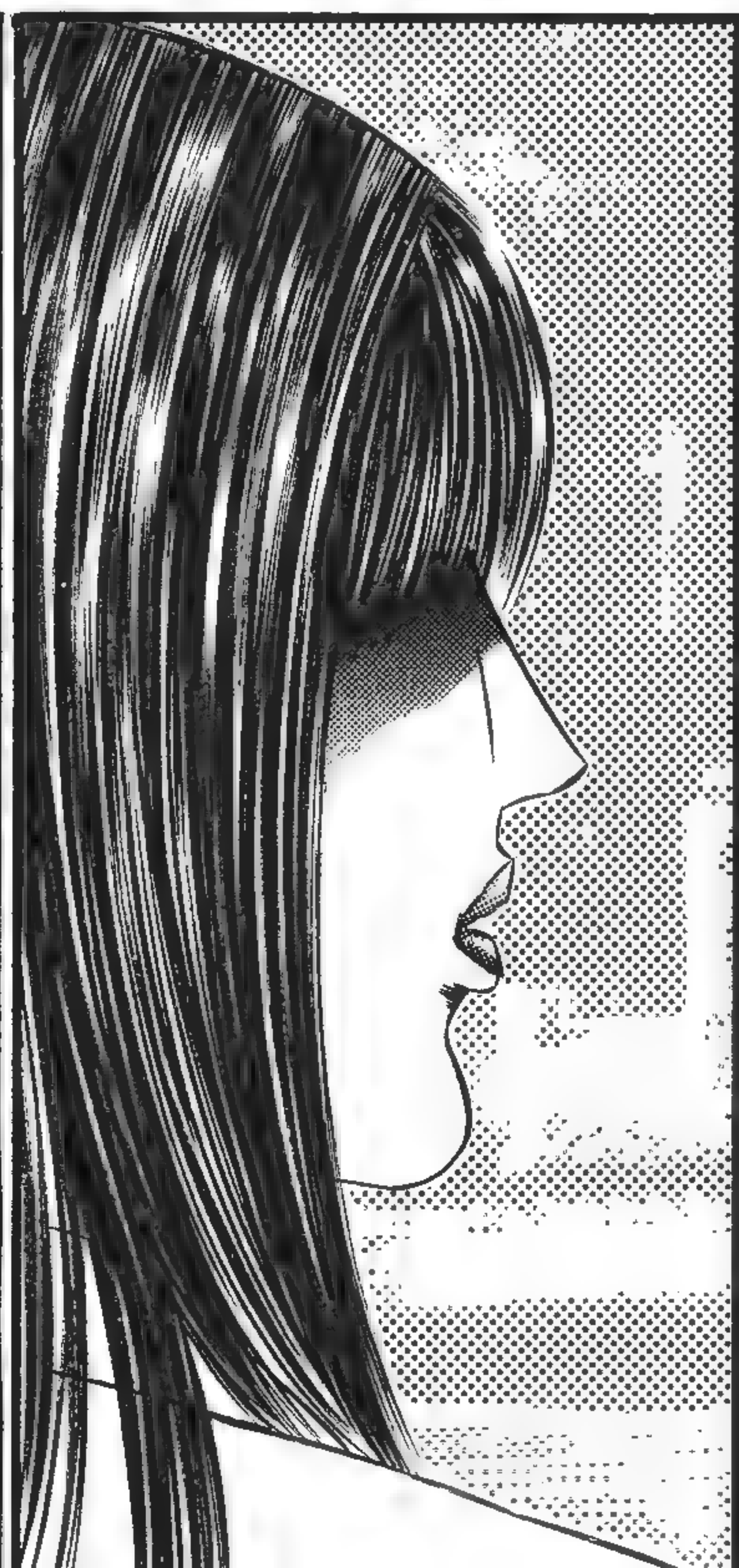
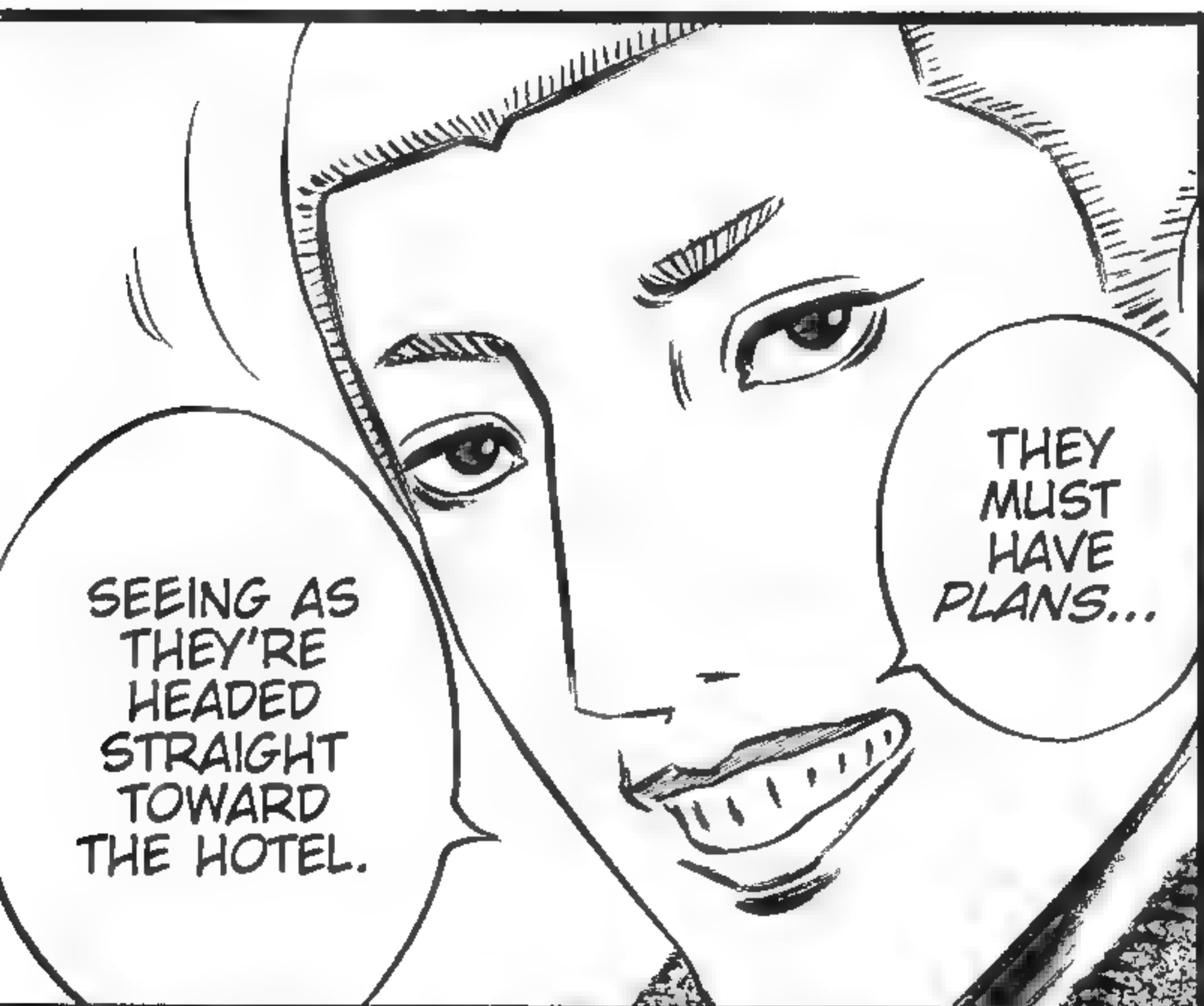
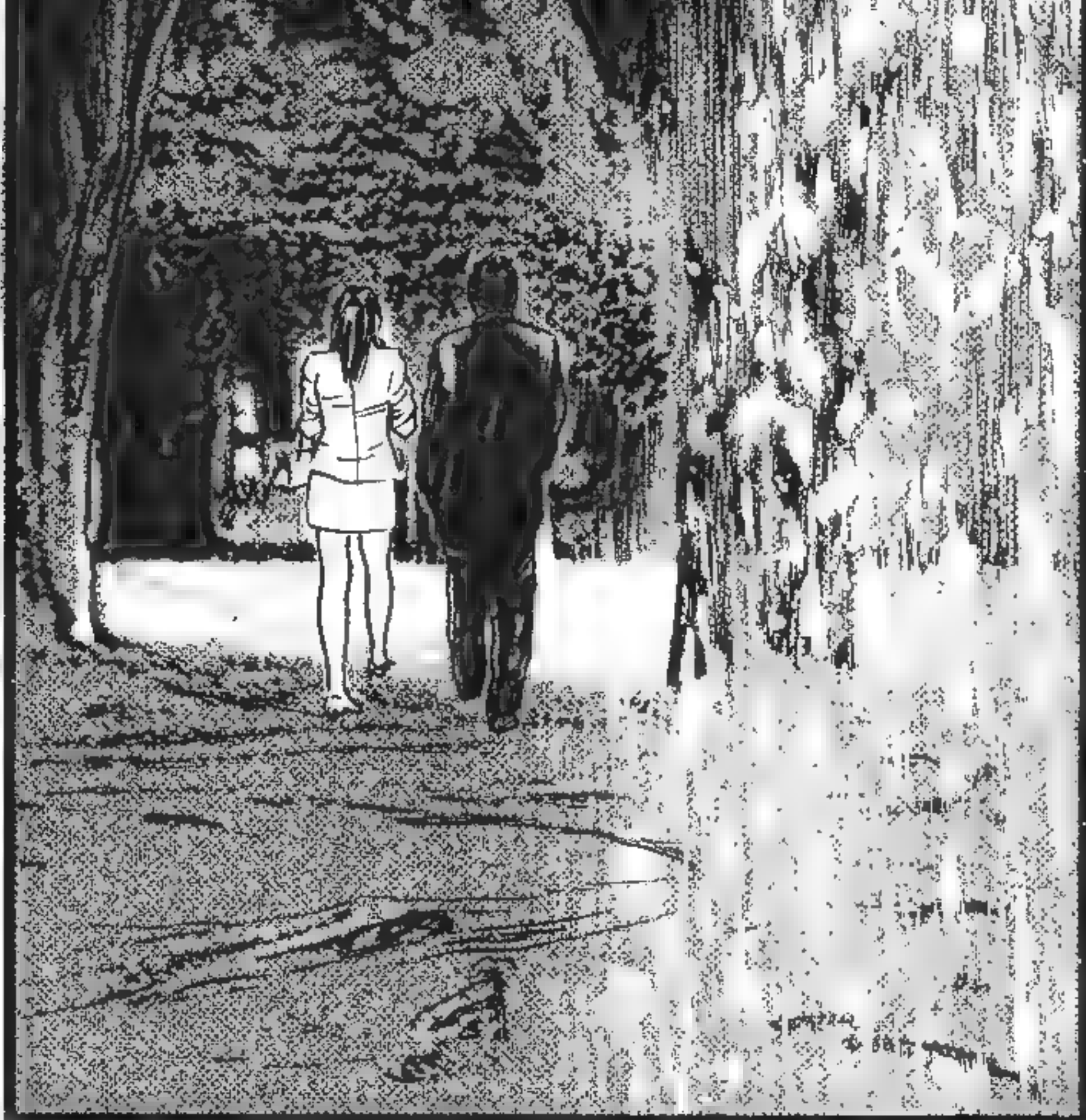
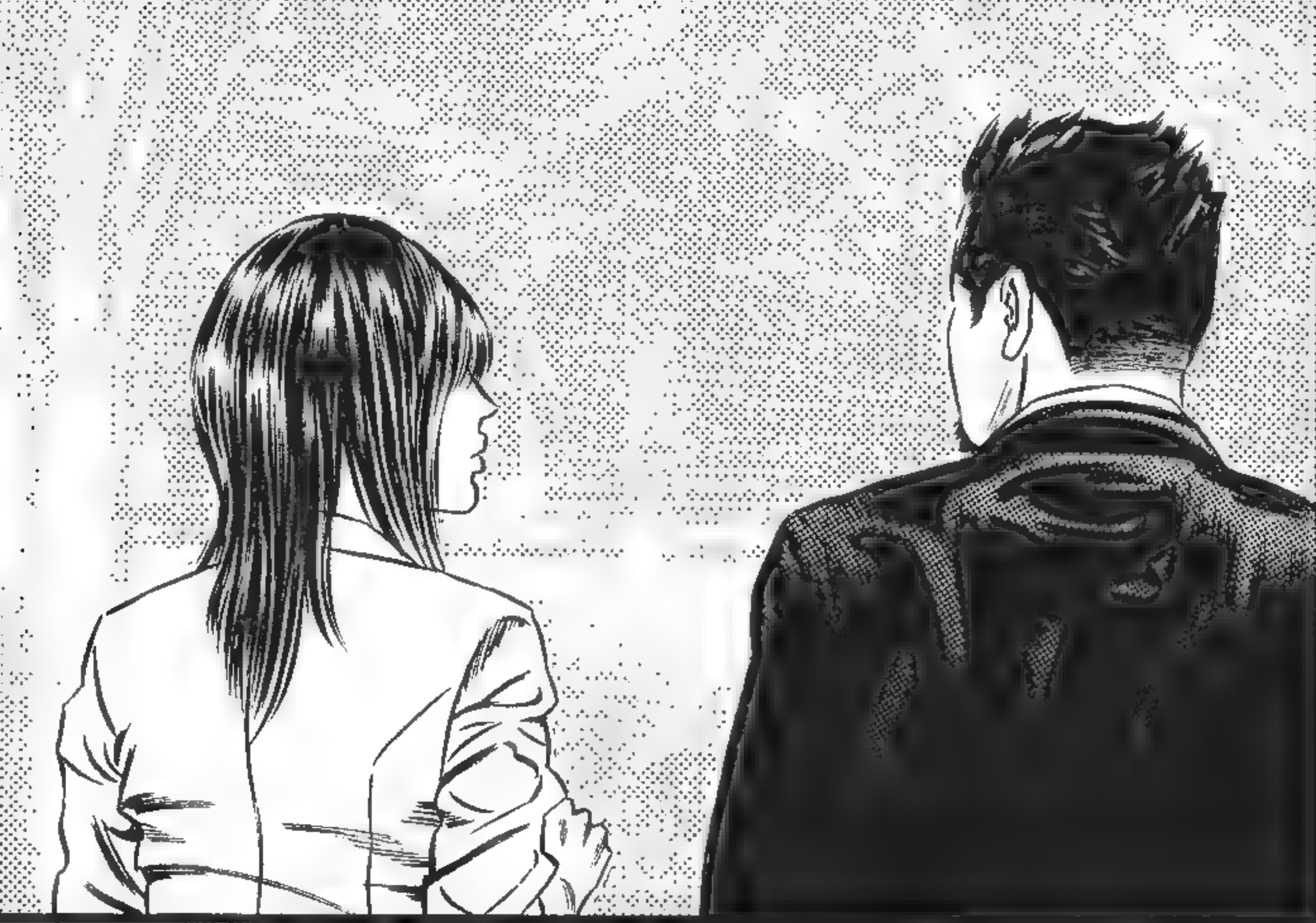


!



IT'LL TAKE
A LITTLE
TIME...

BUT I'LL
LOOK INTO
HER.



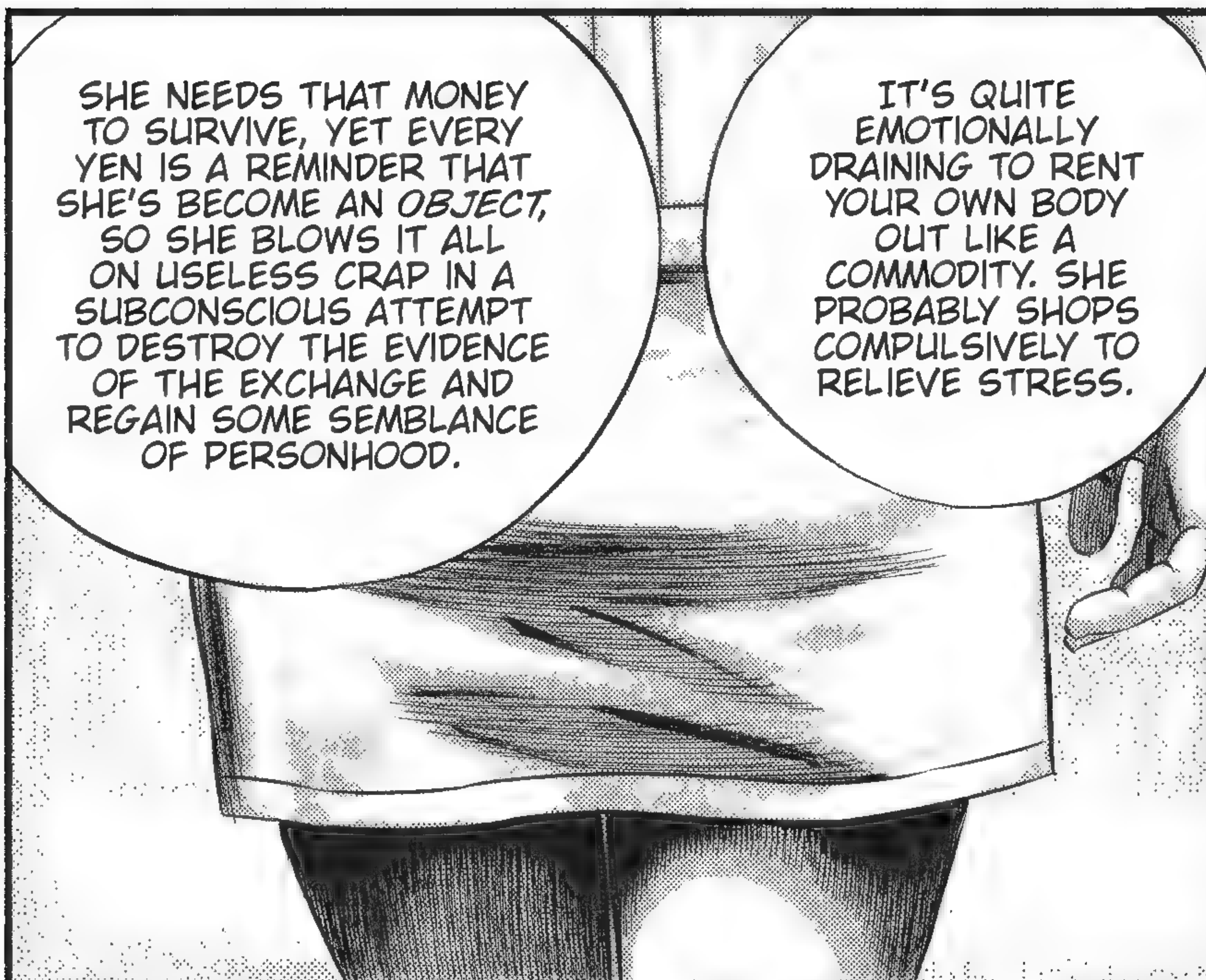


MOUNTAINS
OF LOTION
AND PADS.
MORE THAN
SHE COULD
EVER USE.

HAD SO
MUCH CRAP
IN HER
ROOM.



THAT
WOMAN
...



SHE NEEDS THAT MONEY
TO SURVIVE, YET EVERY
YEN IS A REMINDER THAT
SHE'S BECOME AN OBJECT,
SO SHE BLOWS IT ALL
ON USELESS CRAP IN A
SUBCONSCIOUS ATTEMPT
TO DESTROY THE EVIDENCE
OF THE EXCHANGE AND
REGAIN SOME SEMBLANCE
OF PERSONHOOD.

IT'S QUITE
EMOTIONALLY
DRAINING TO RENT
YOUR OWN BODY
OUT LIKE A
COMMODITY. SHE
PROBABLY SHOPS
COMPULSIVELY TO
RELIEVE STRESS.



SHE'S
LIKELY AN
IMPULSE
BUYER.

AH, I
SEE.



WELL, YEAH.
THEY MAY BE
DRESSED LIKE
OBJECTS, BUT
THEY'RE STILL
HUMAN, YOU
KNOW?

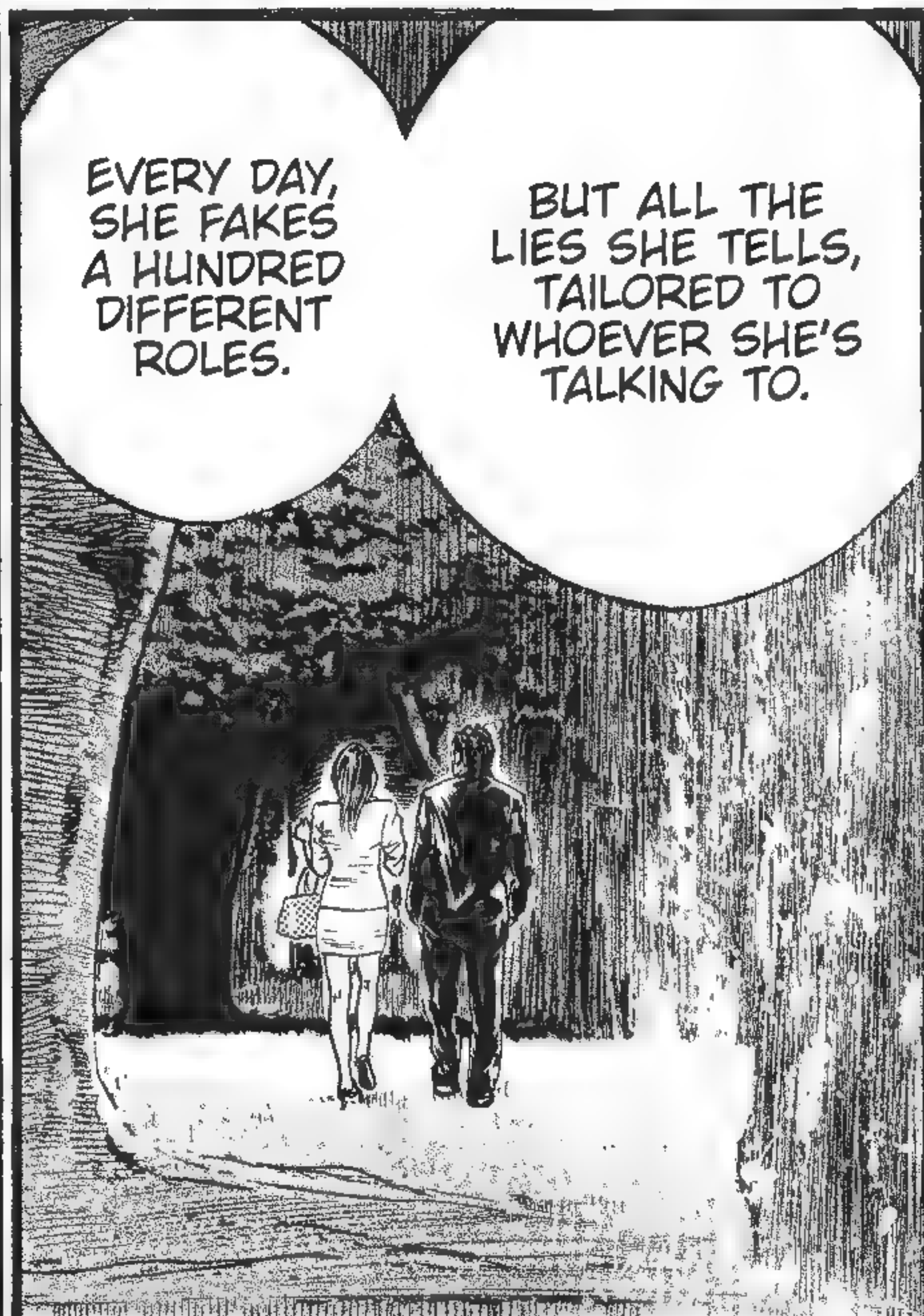
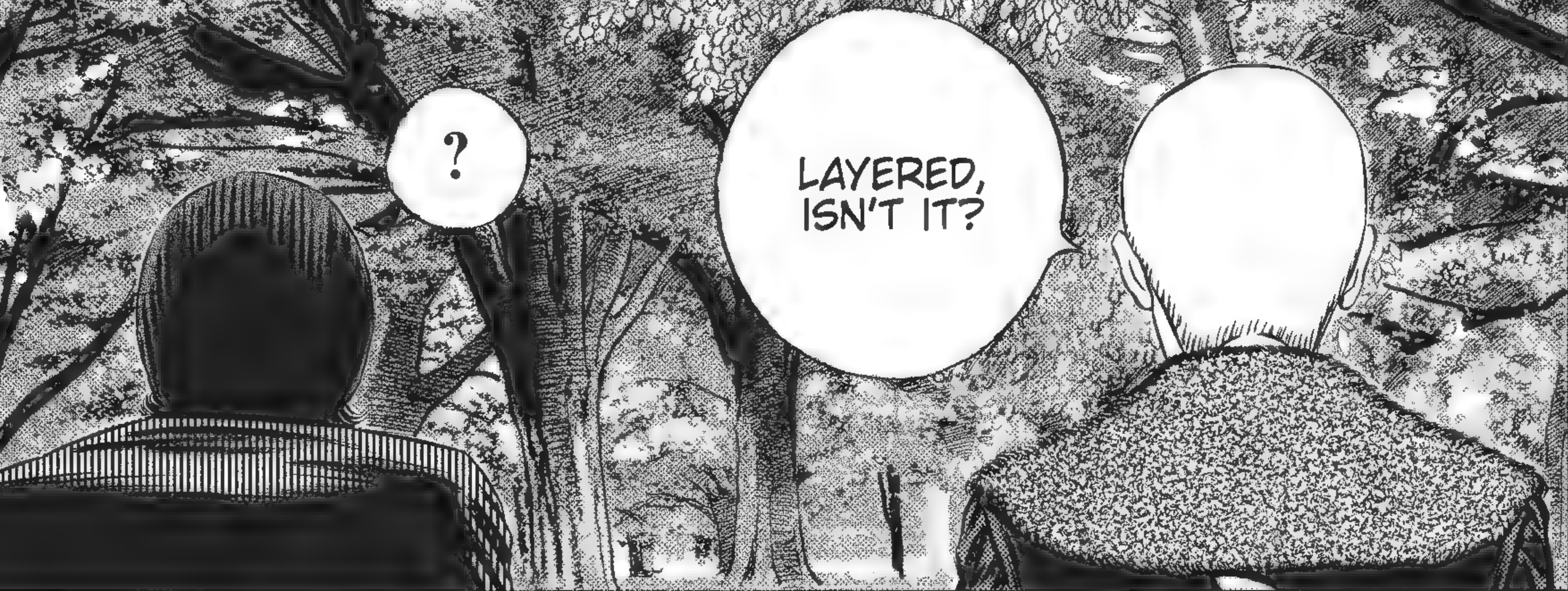


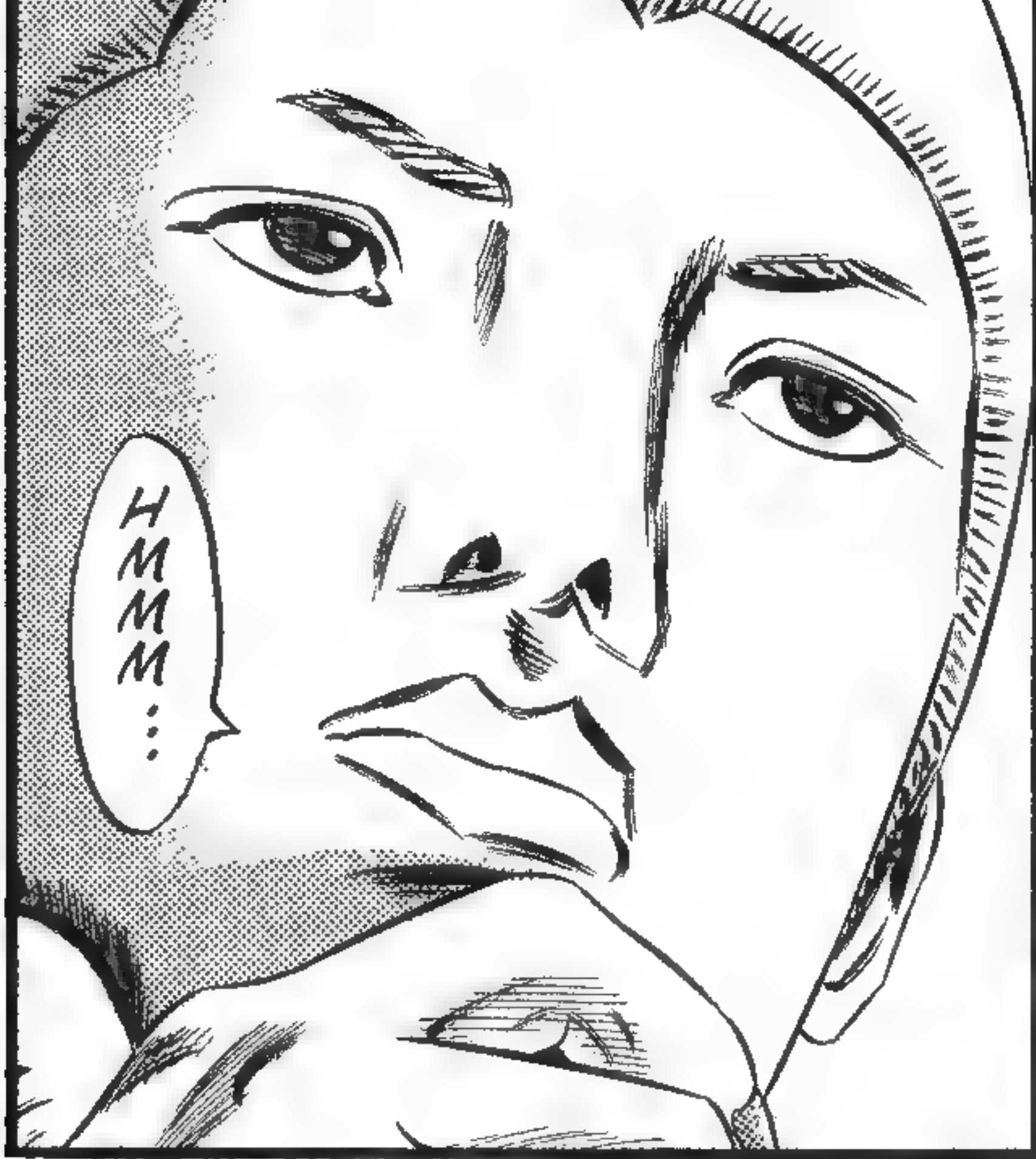
HA HA...



FEEL
STRESS
FROM
TIME TO
TIME.

SO
EVEN BED
BUNNIES
WHO JUST
FLOP
AROUND
ALL DAY...





HMM...



!

THEN WHAT ABOUT WHEN SHE'S GOT NO FACE?

OKAY.



BUT EVEN THEN, SHE CAN'T STAND HAVING HER TRUE FEELINGS SEEN.

CAN'T THINK OF ANY MORE LIES...

TAP TAP TAP TAP

MAYBE SOMETIMES SHE CAN'T BRING HERSELF TO FAKE IT ANYMORE.



...



BUT KEEP IN MIND WHAT I SAID BEFORE.

THOUGH, WELL... WE CAN ANALYZE IT ALL WE LIKE...

TWIST

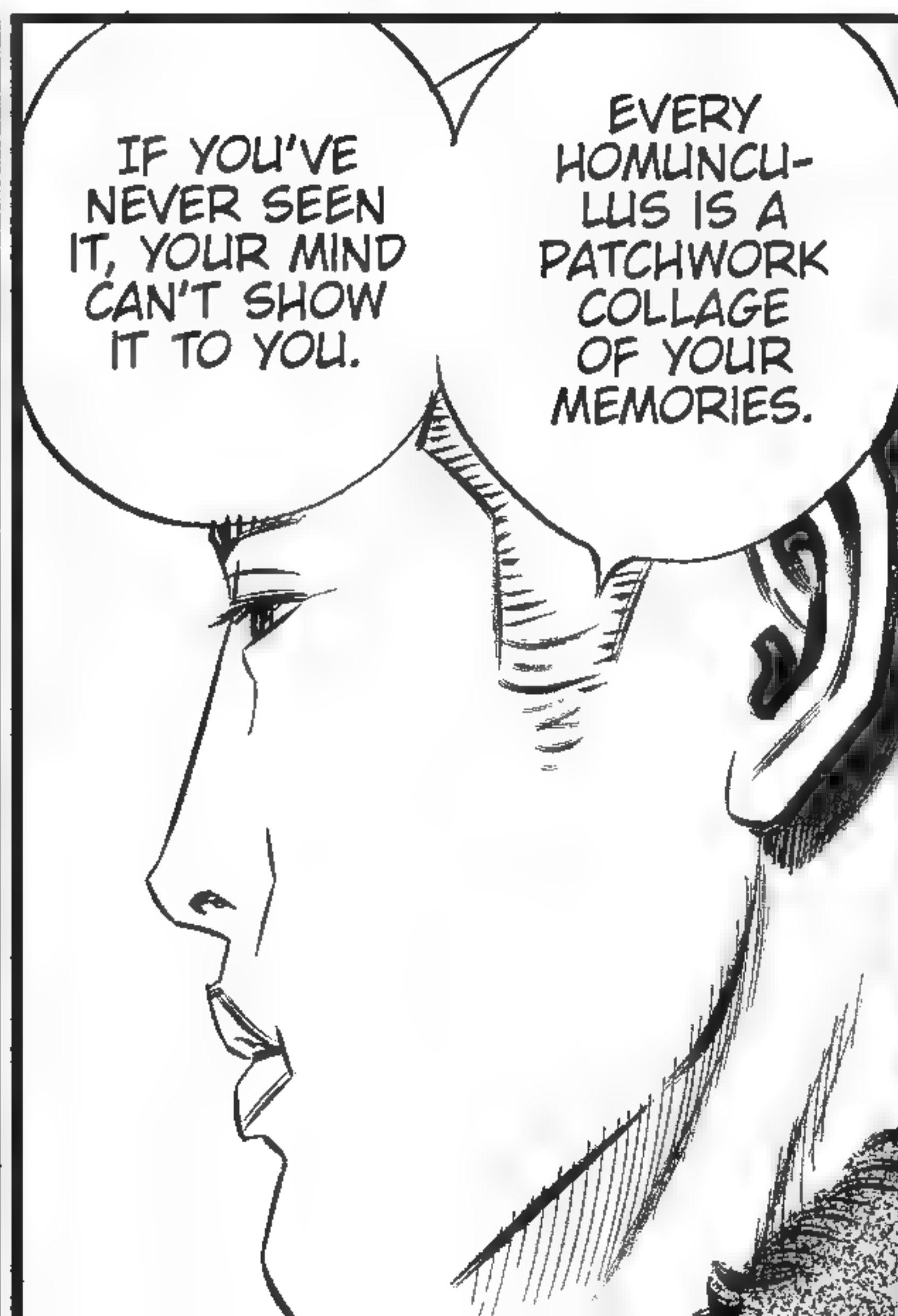
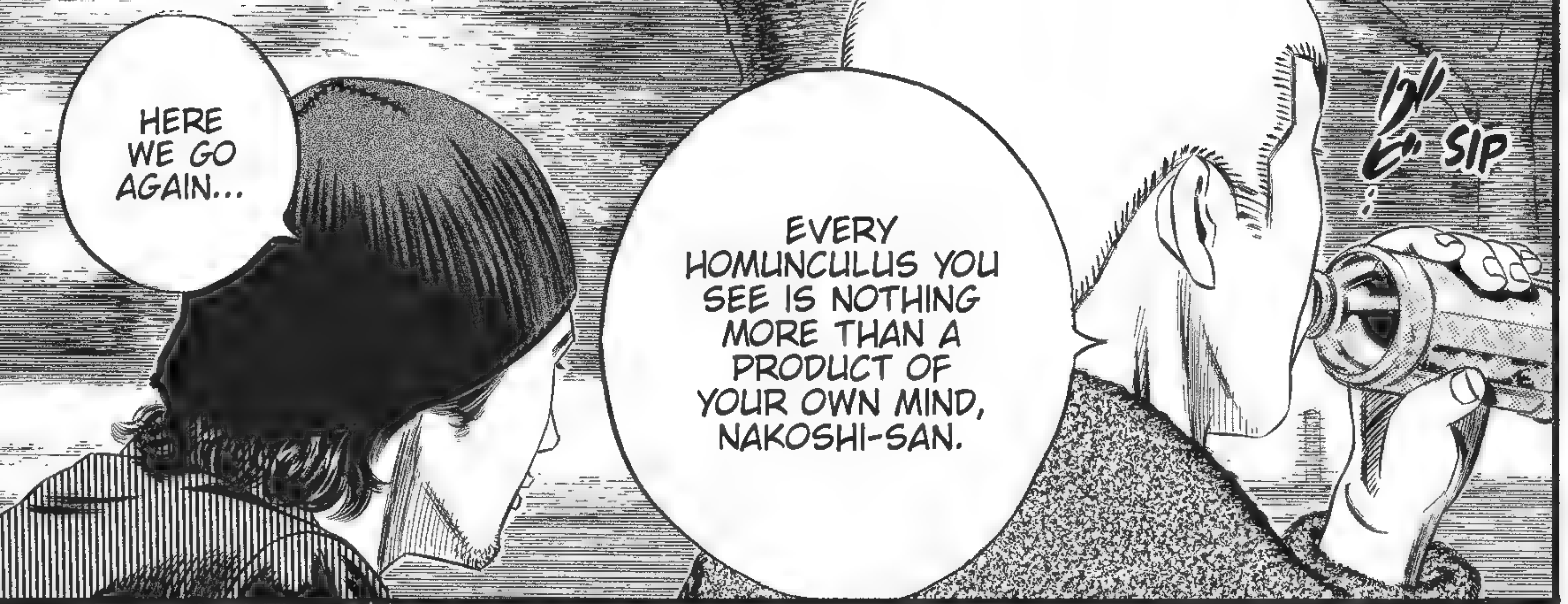
TWIST

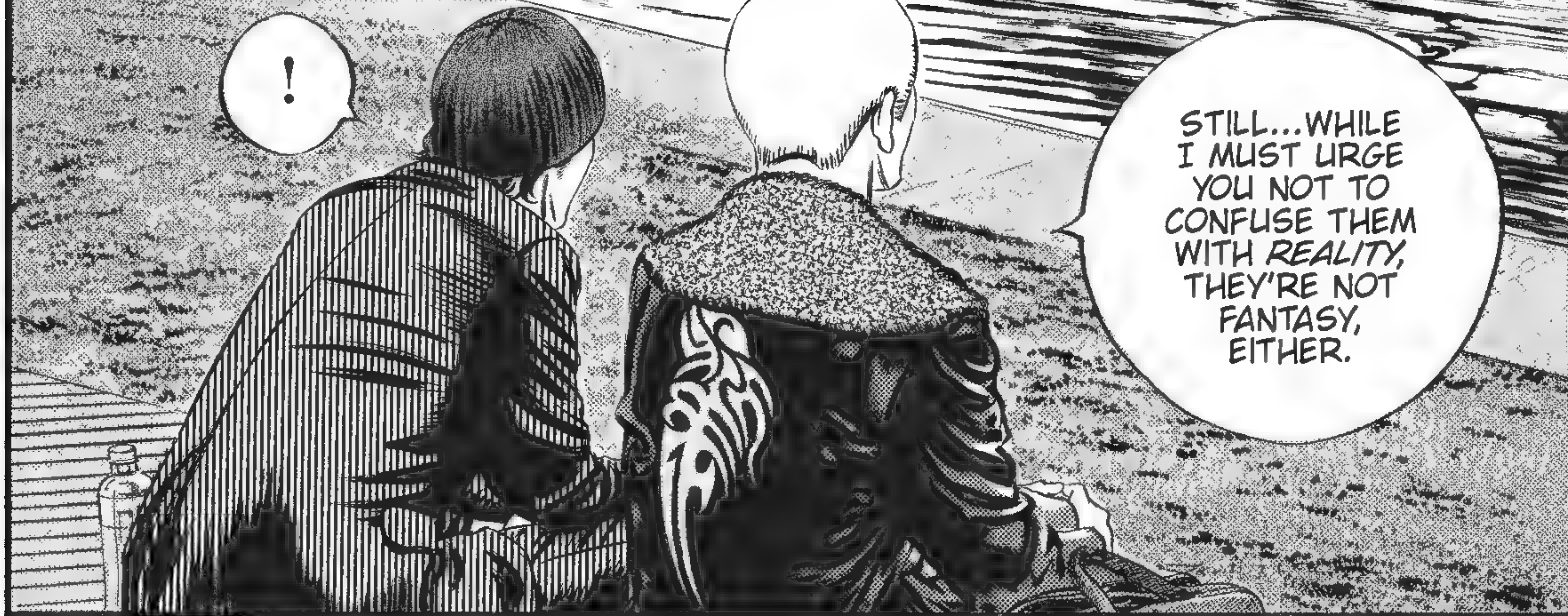


AND I'M JUST SPIT-BALLING HERE...

SO IN A SENSE...

MAYBE THAT'S AS CLOSE AS SHE CAN GET TO SINCERITY NOWADAYS?



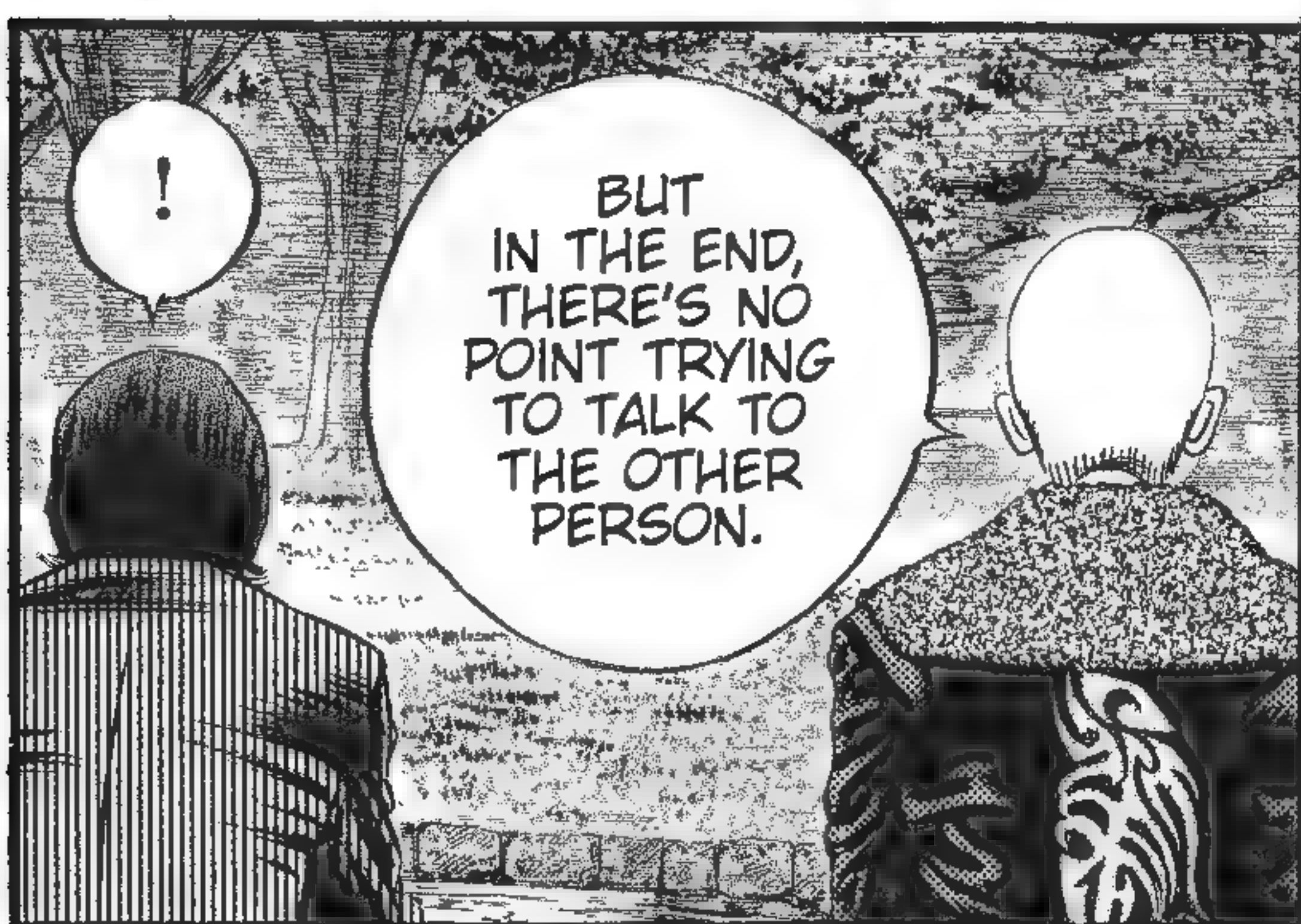


STILL...WHILE
I MUST URGE
YOU NOT TO
CONFUSE THEM
WITH *REALITY*,
THEY'RE NOT
FANTASY,
EITHER.



SEEING
THEM MAKES
YOUR MIND
GENERATE THESE
DISTORTIONS.
IT'S LIKE IT'S
SENDING YOUR
CONSCIOUSNESS
A MESSAGE.

YOU HAVE
OVERLAPPING
EXPERIENCES
WITH THESE
PEOPLE. YOU'RE
CUT FROM THE
SAME CLOTH.

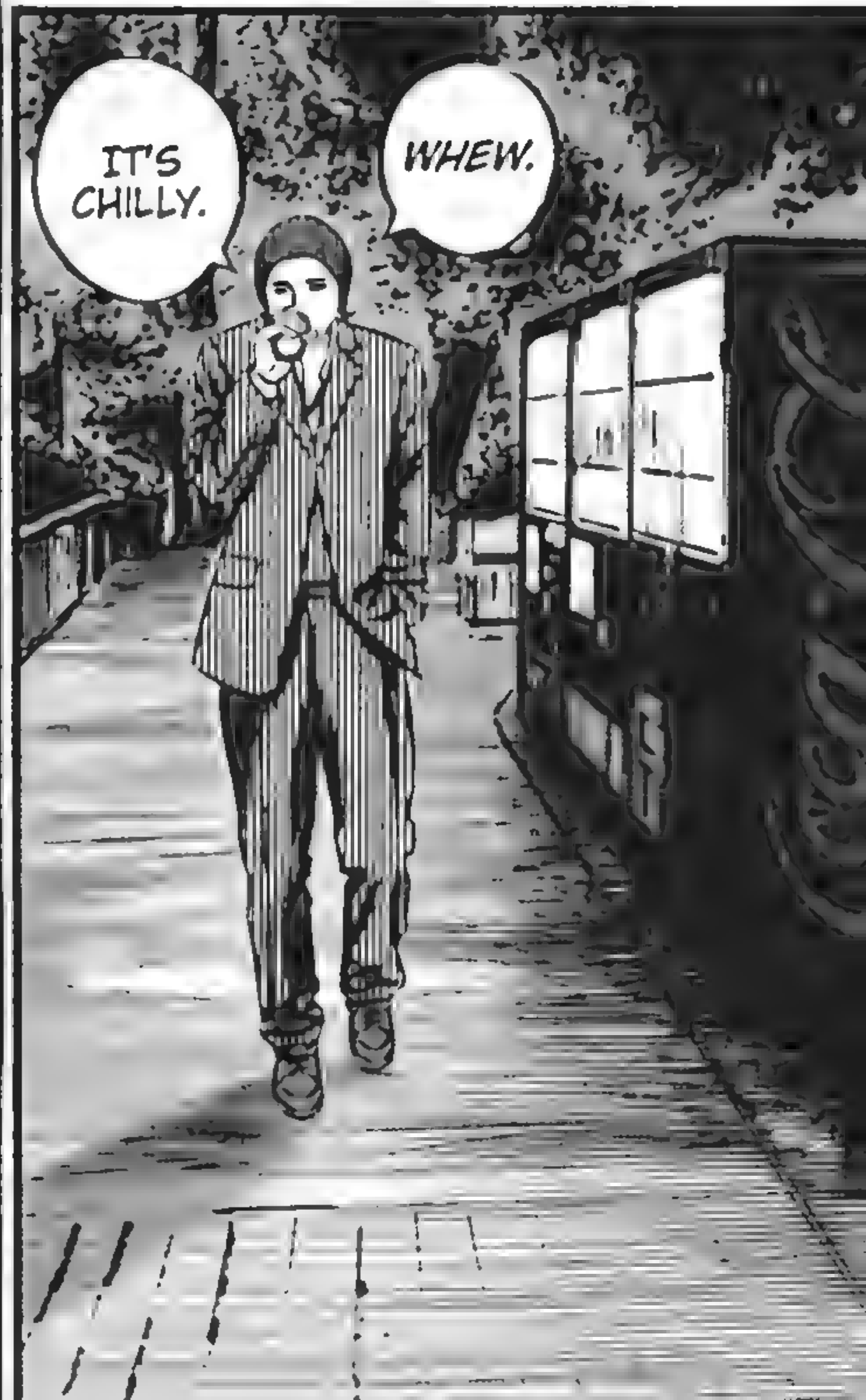
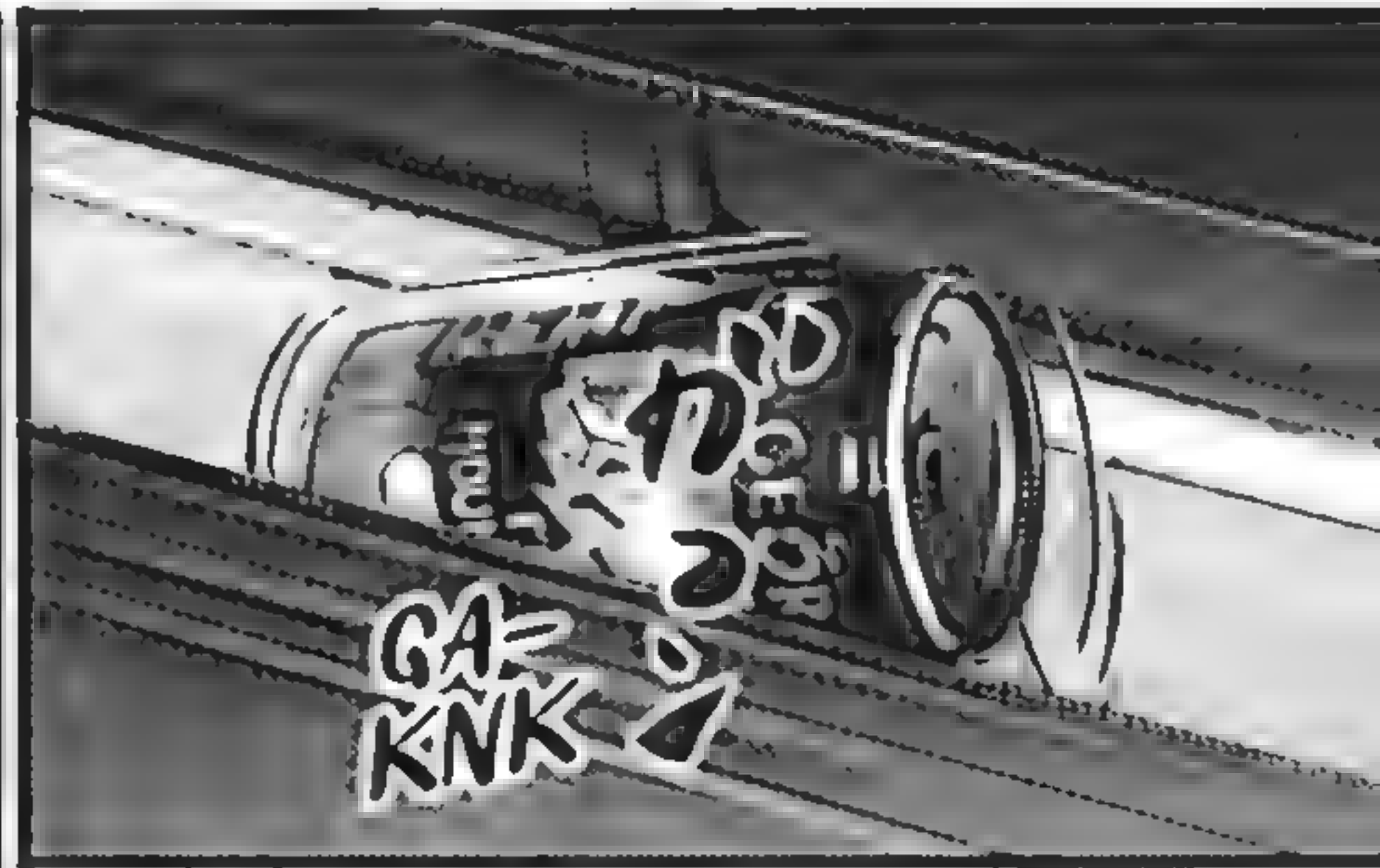
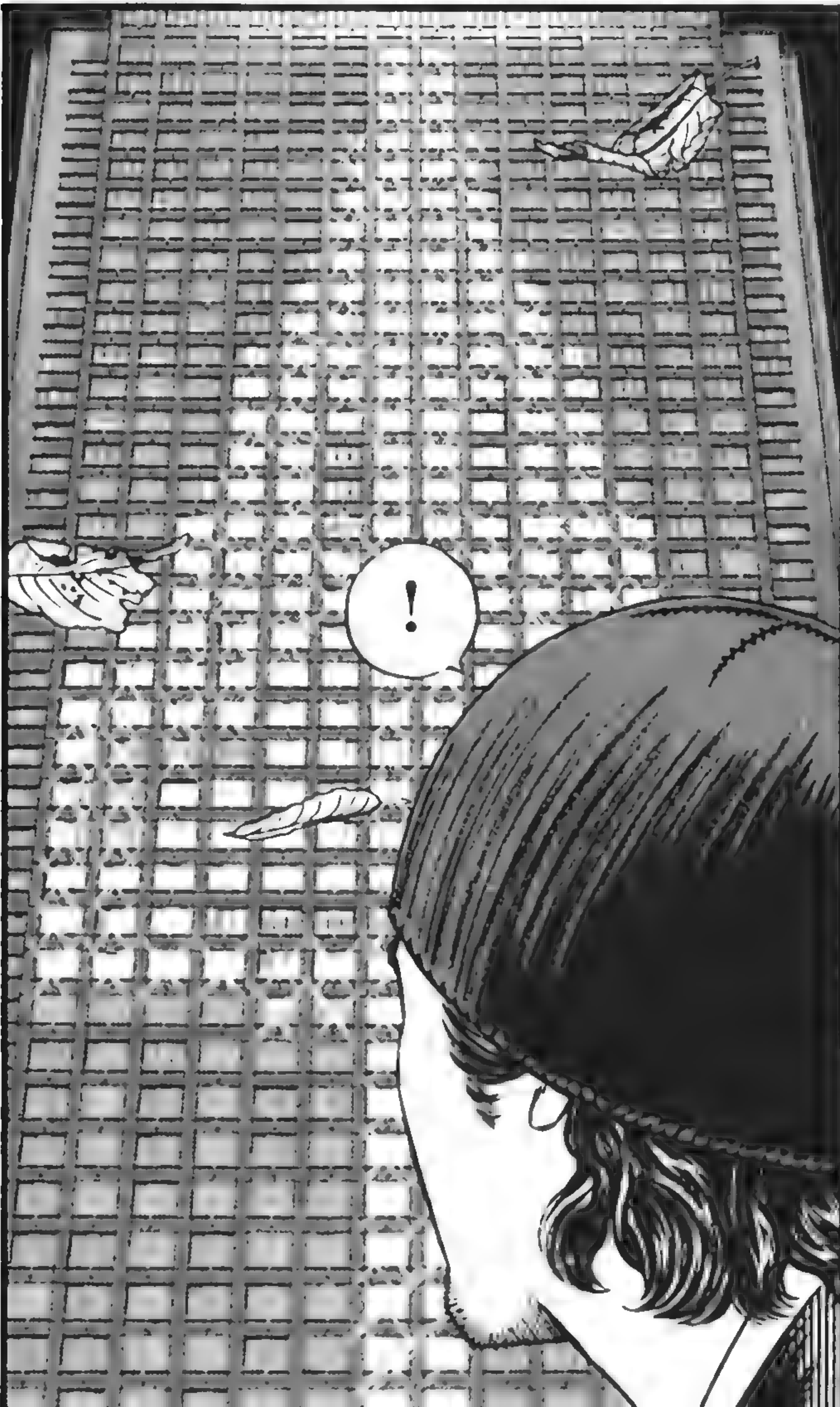


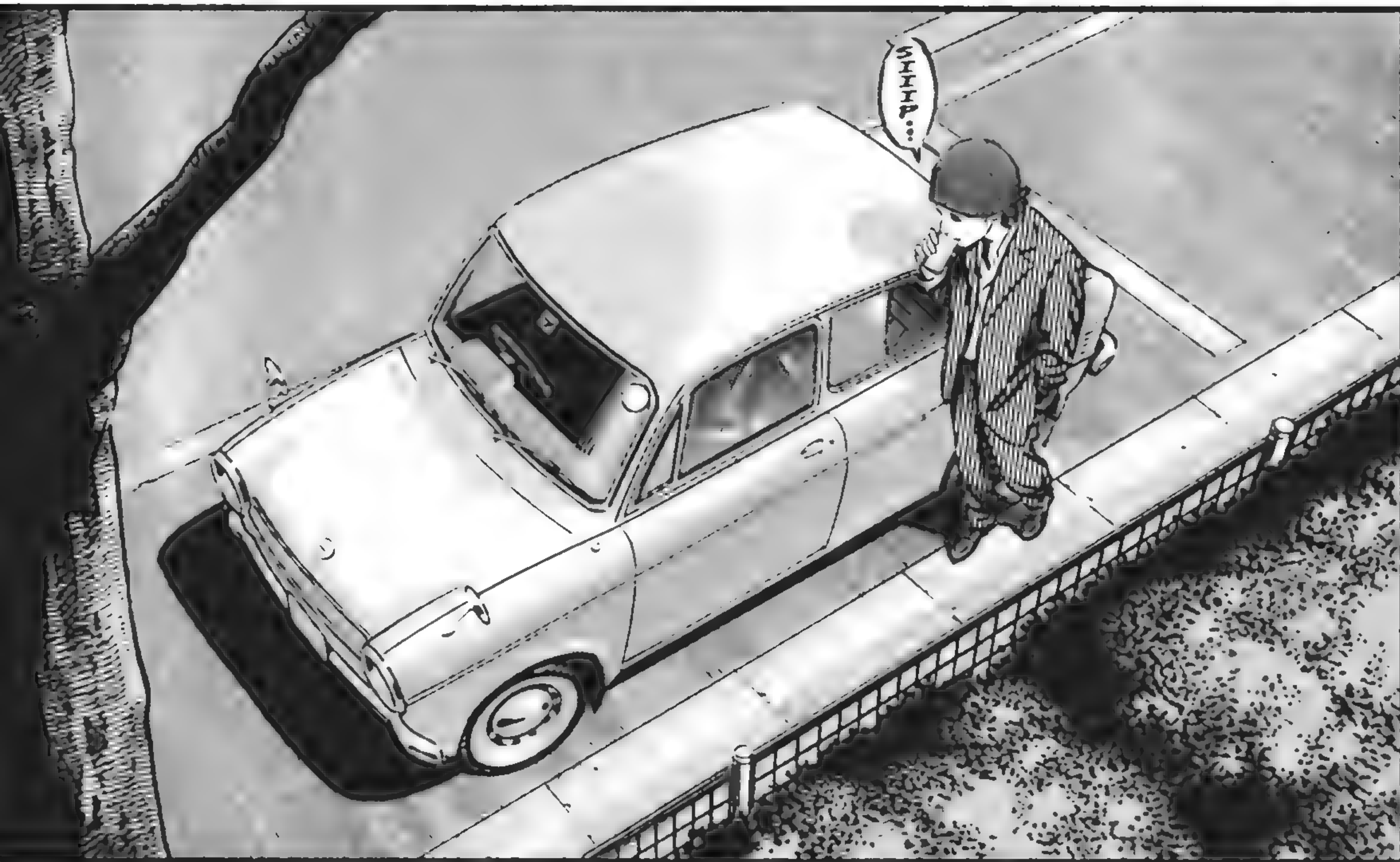
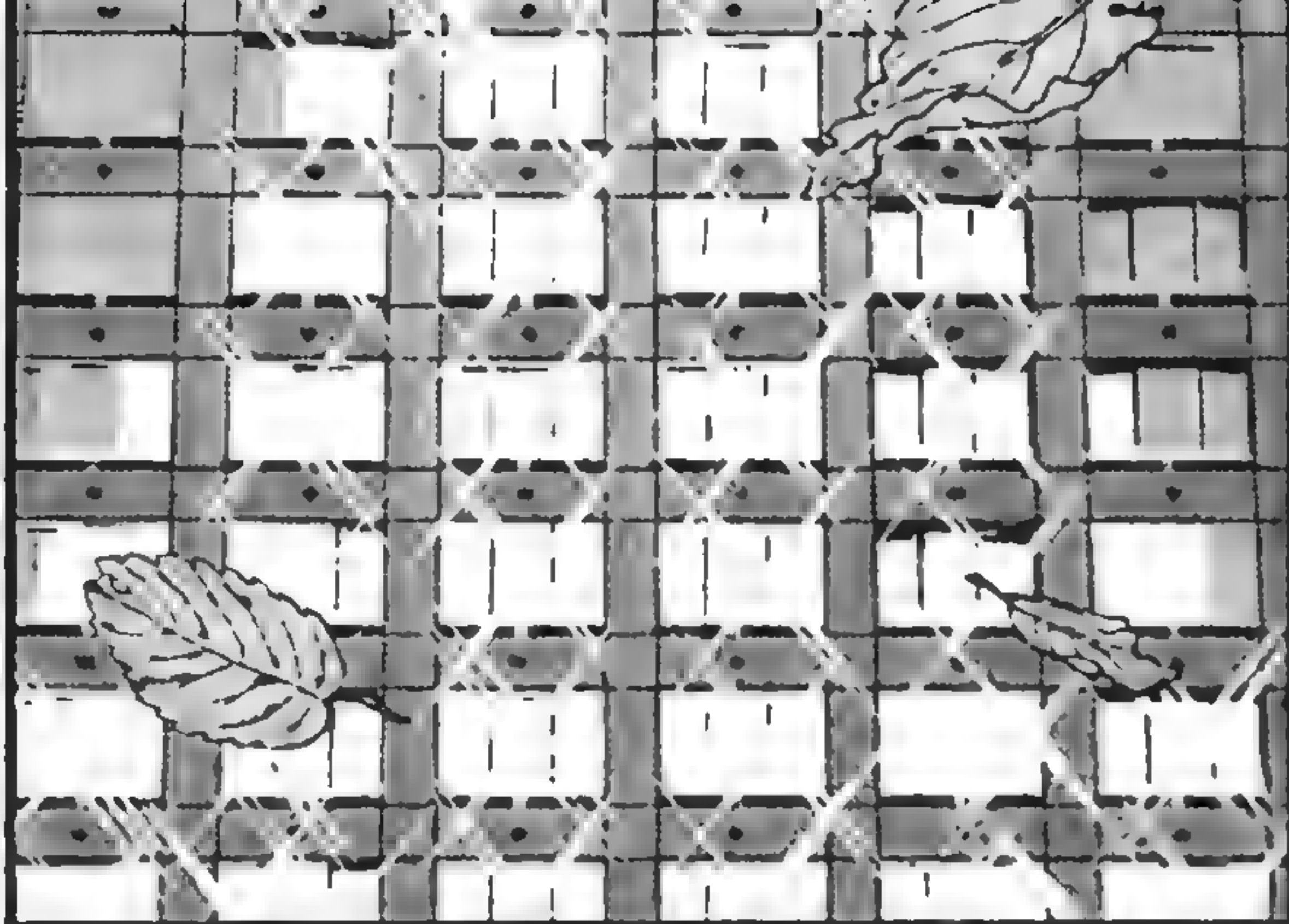
BUT
IN THE END,
THERE'S NO
POINT TRYING
TO TALK TO
THE OTHER
PERSON.



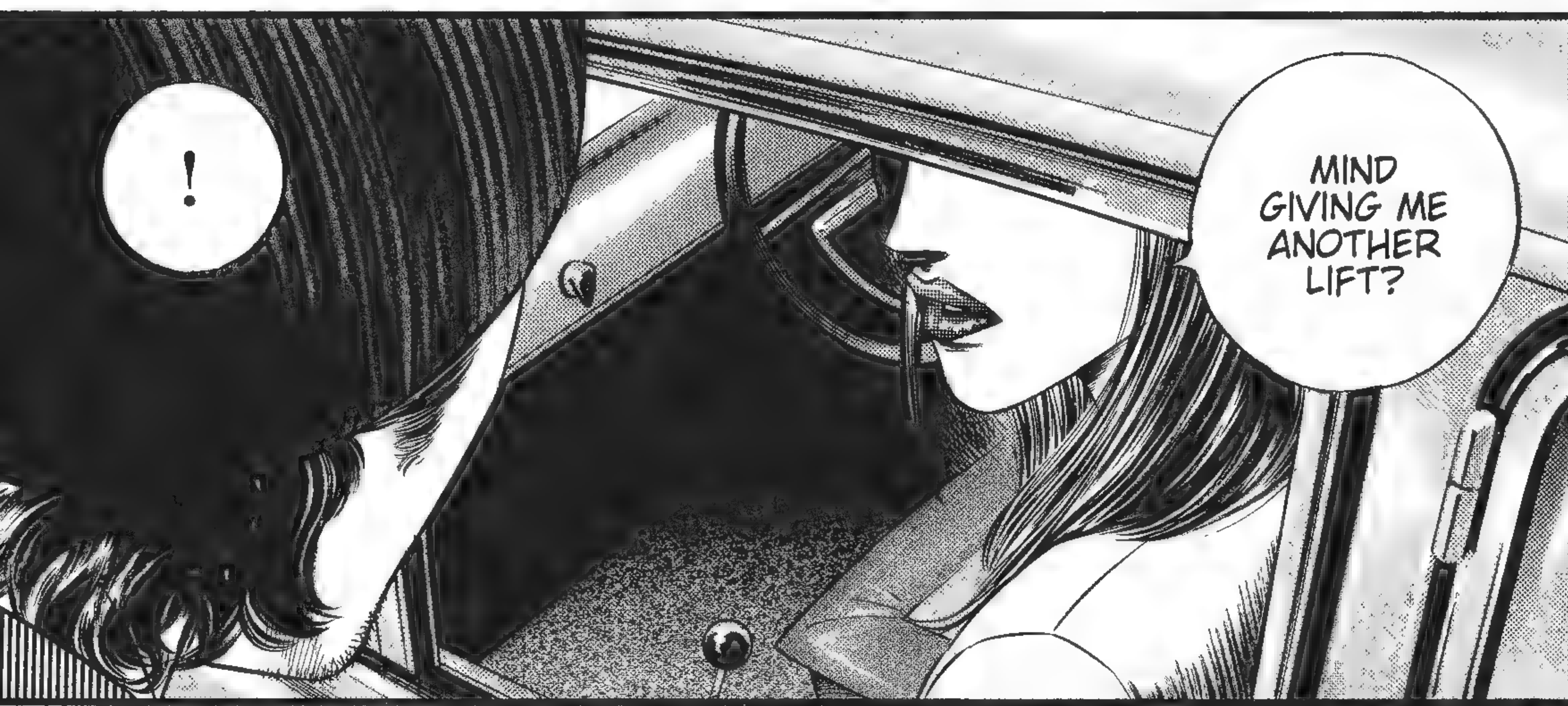
YOU HAVE
TO TALK TO
YOURSELF.









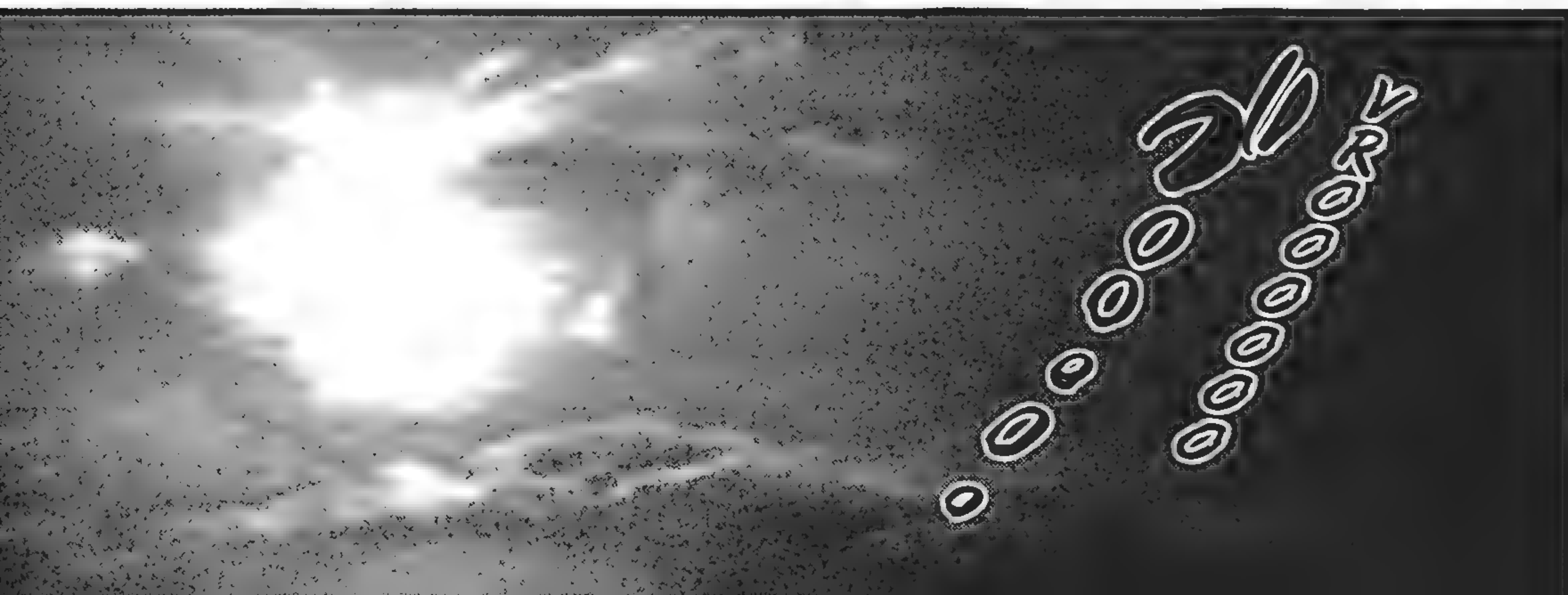
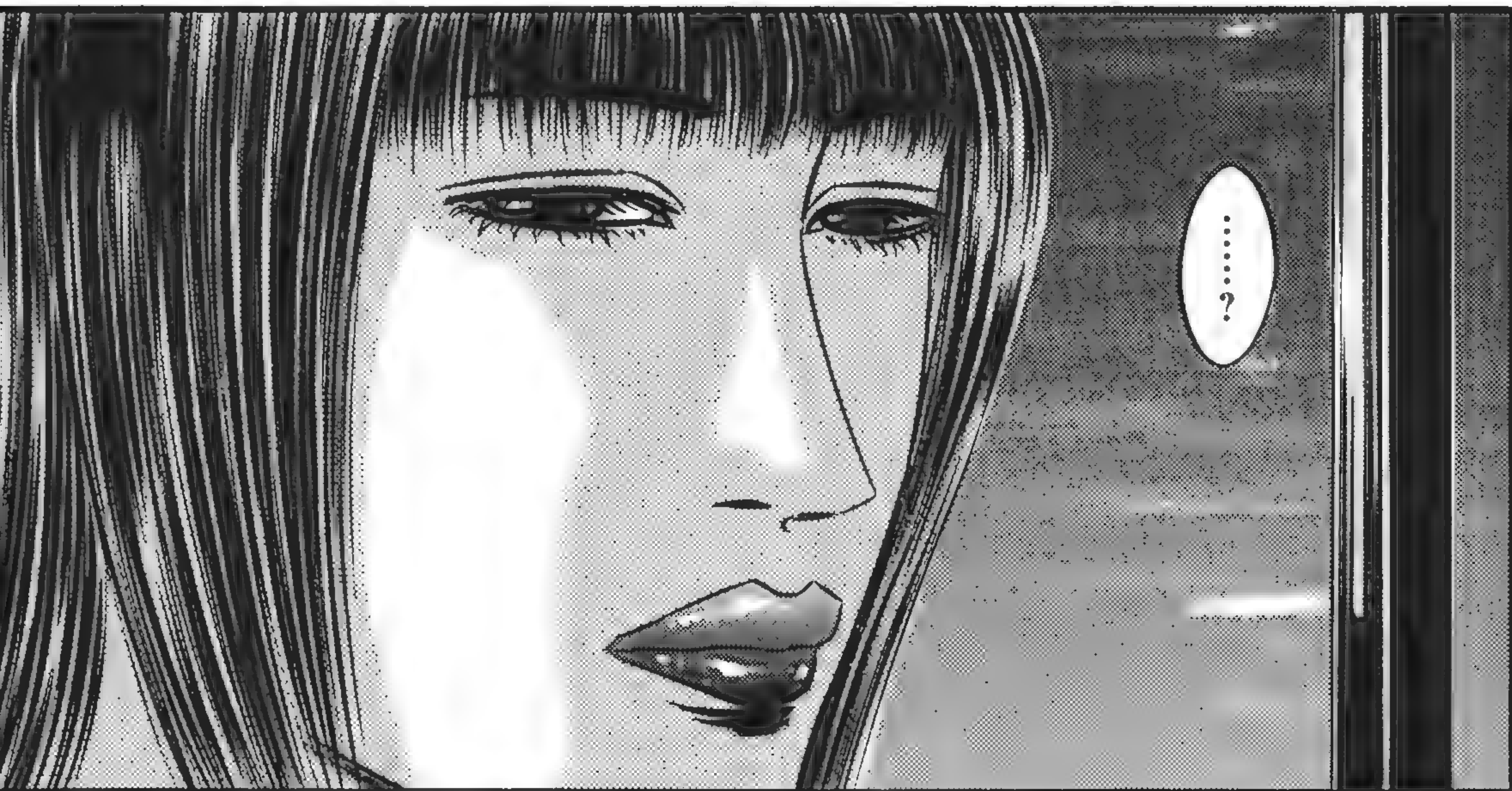




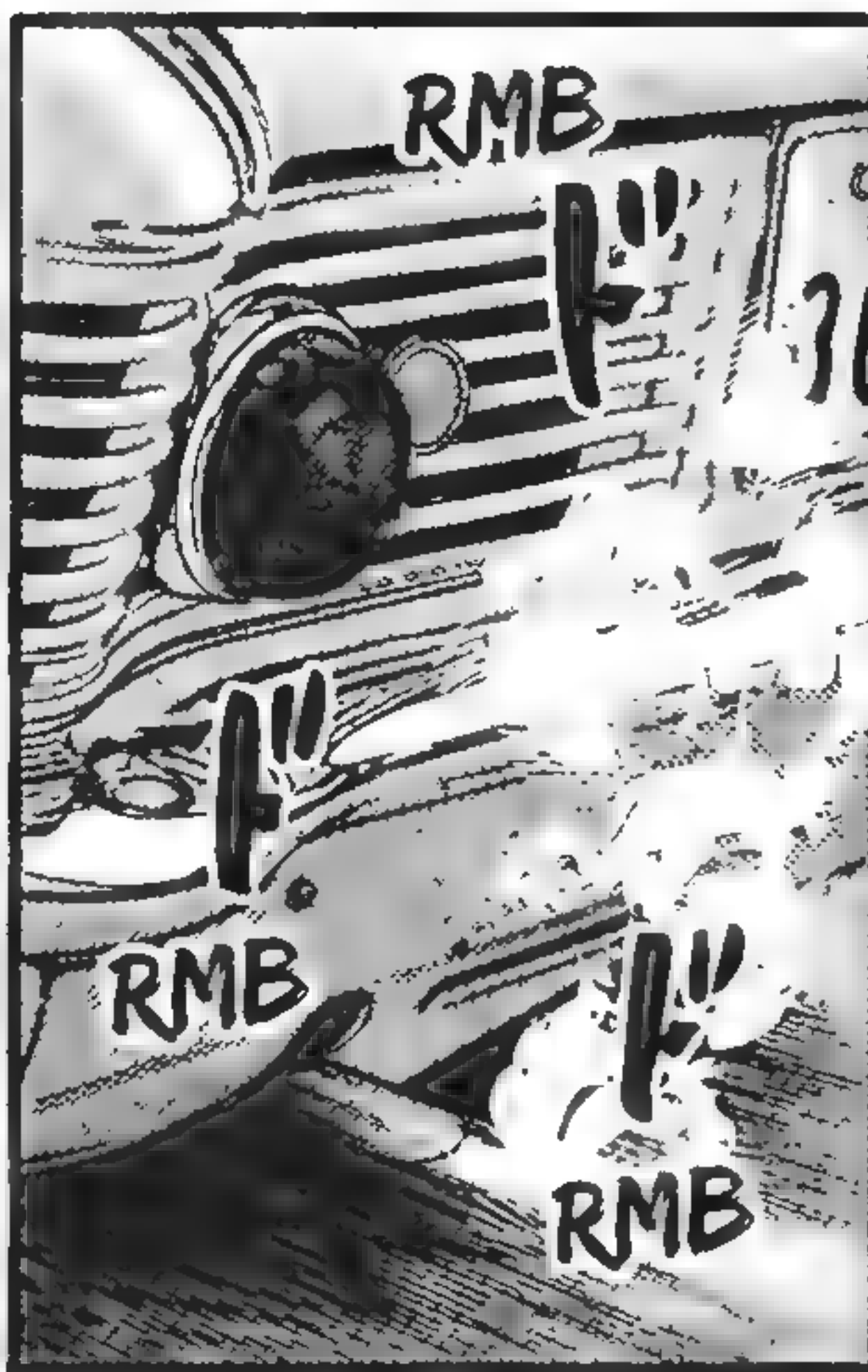
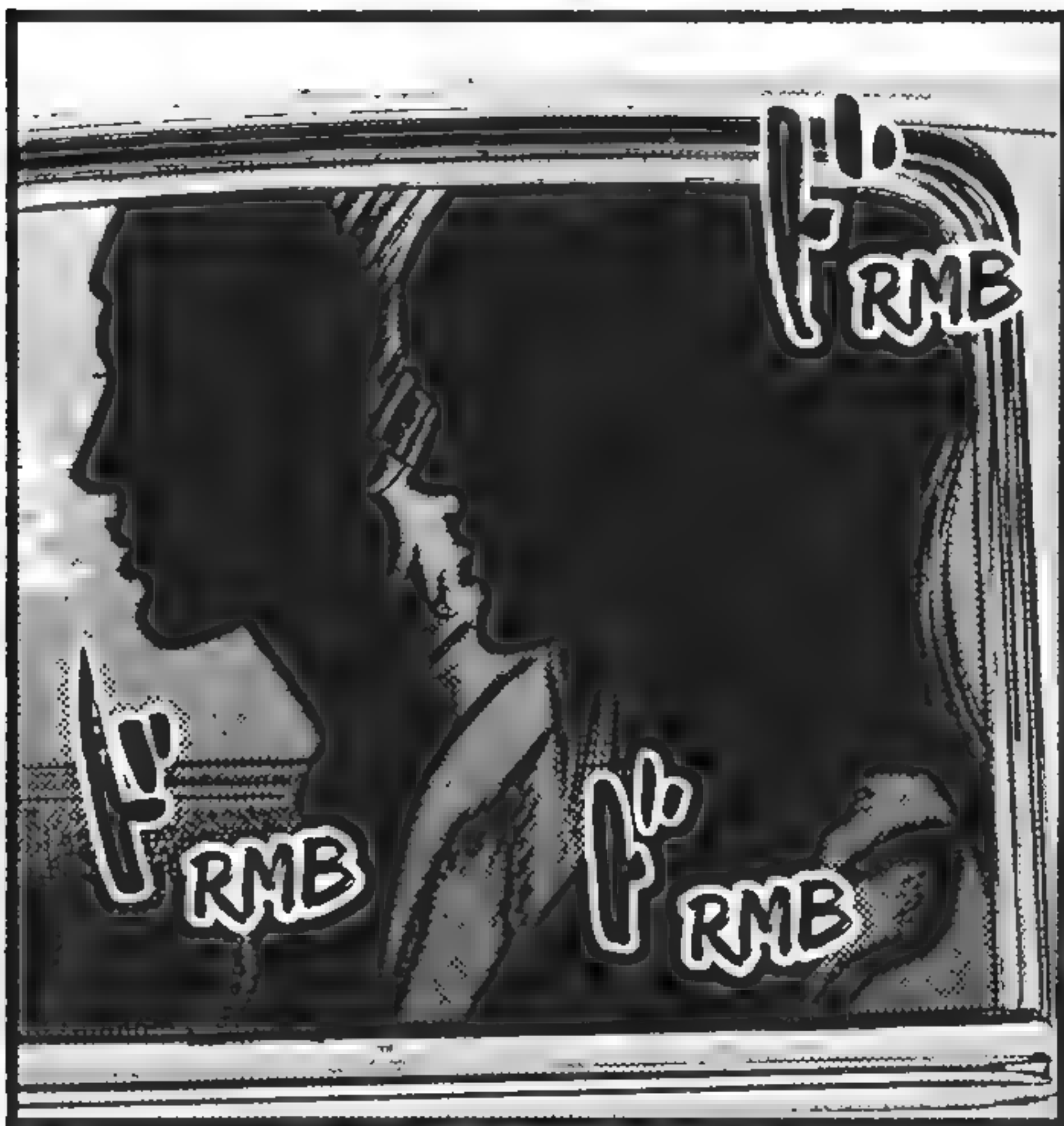
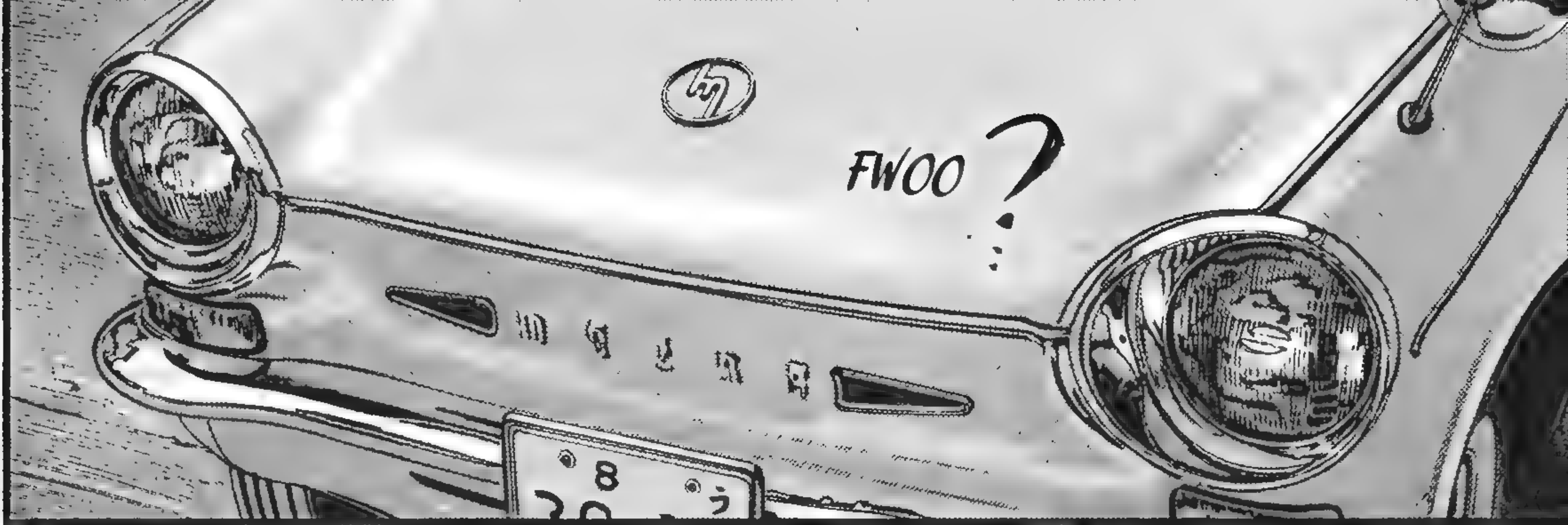
7

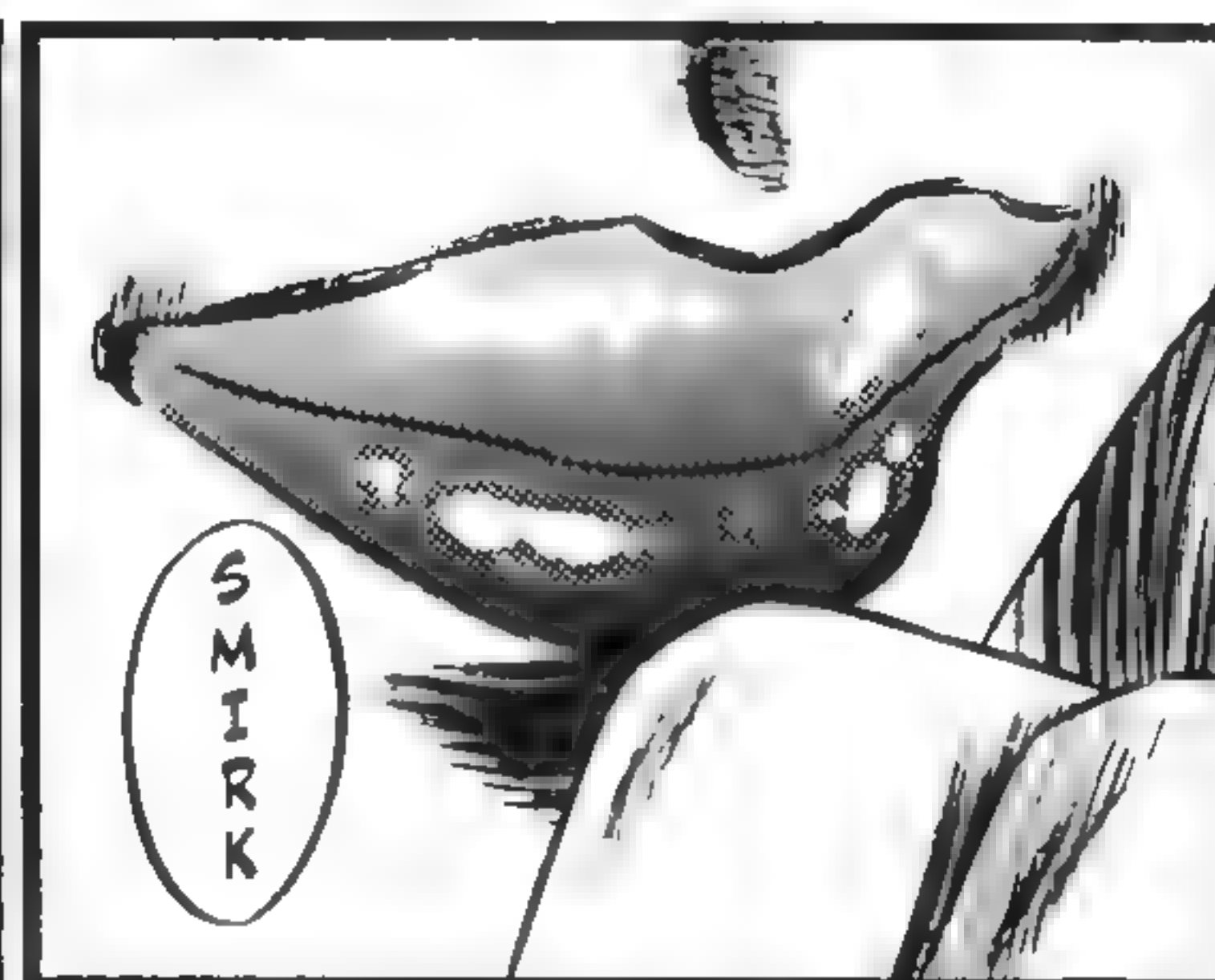
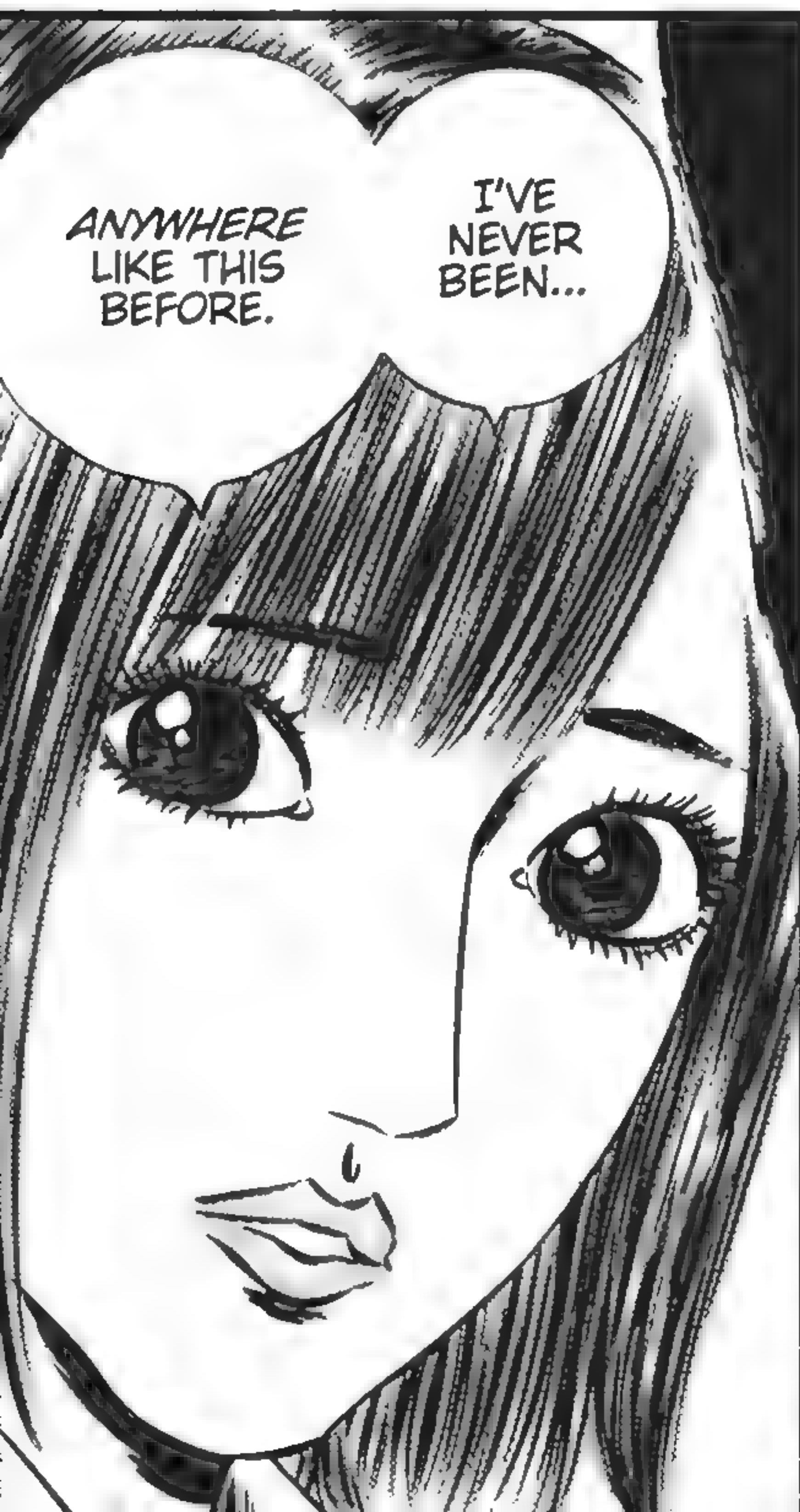
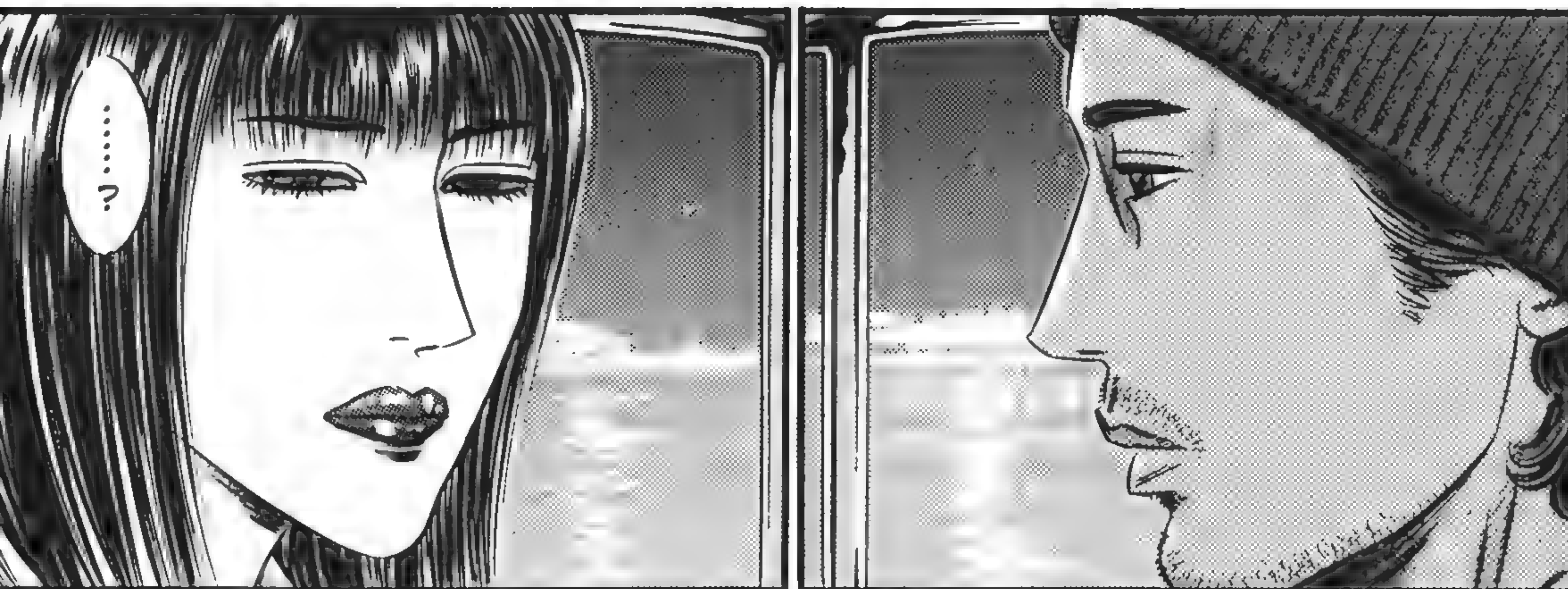
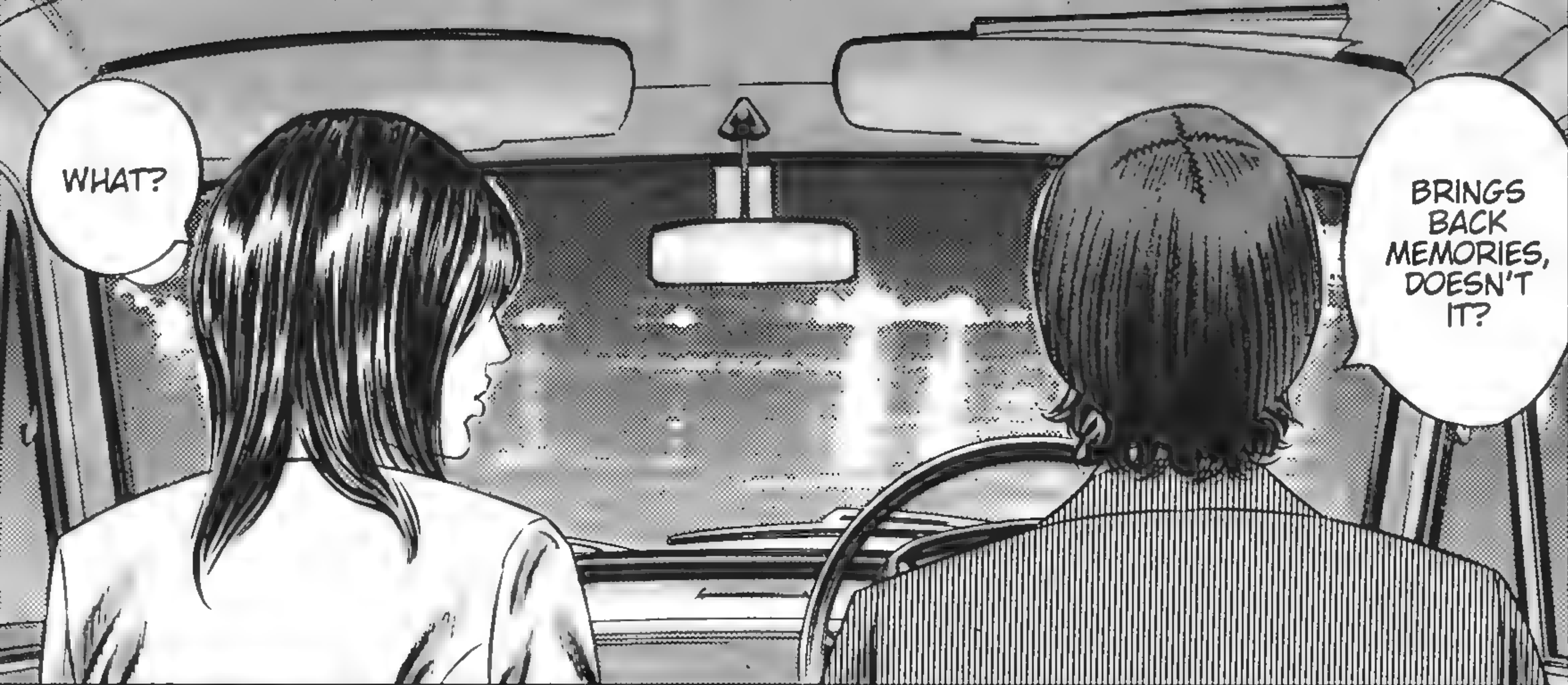
14

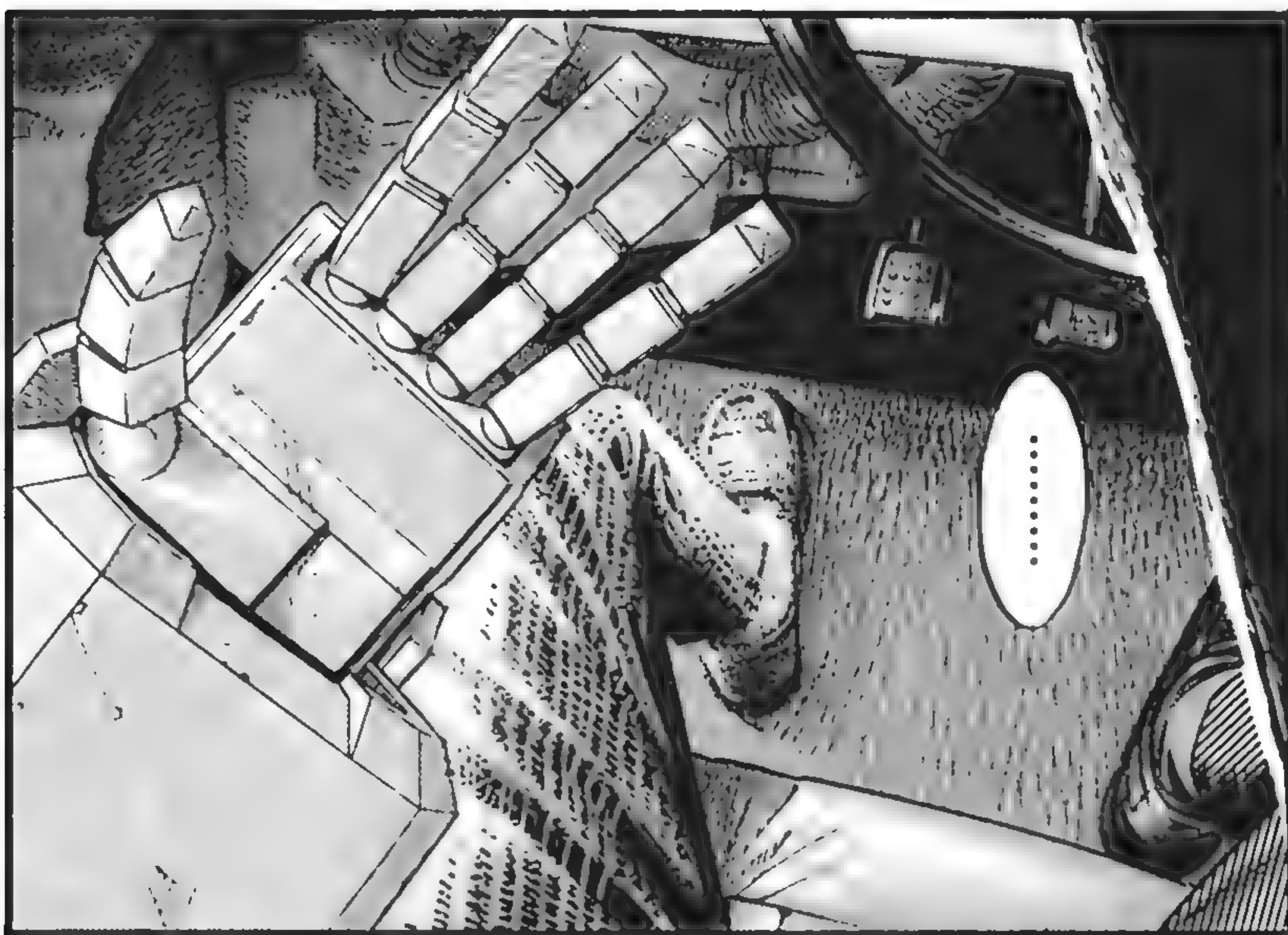
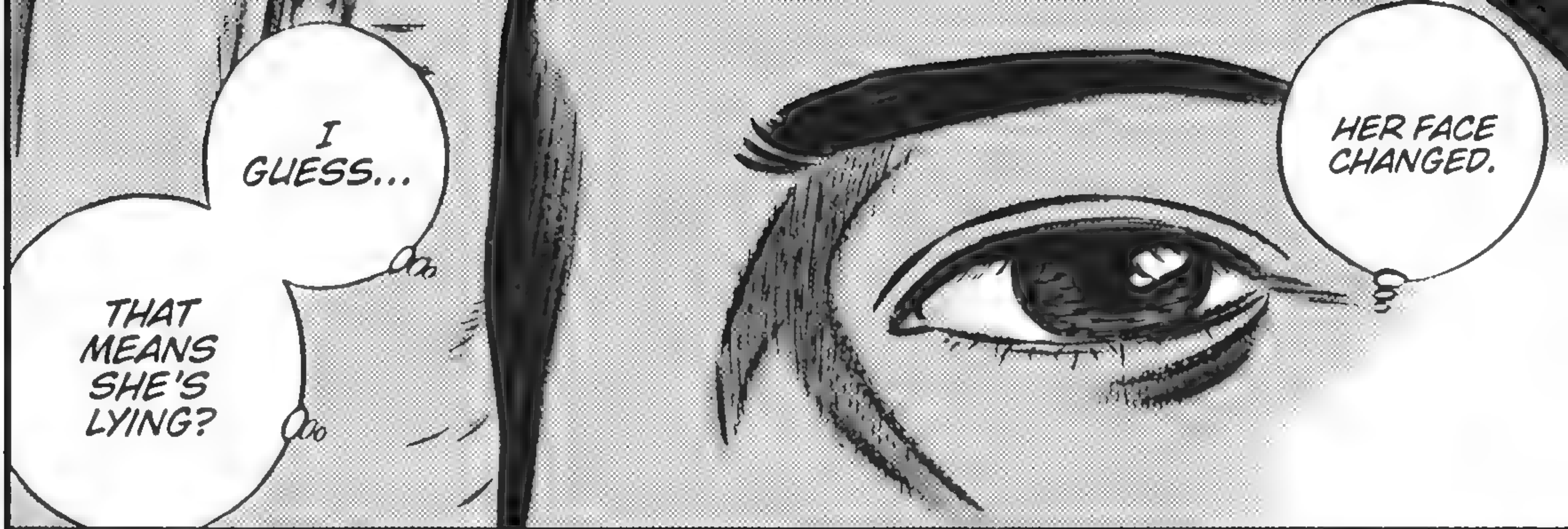


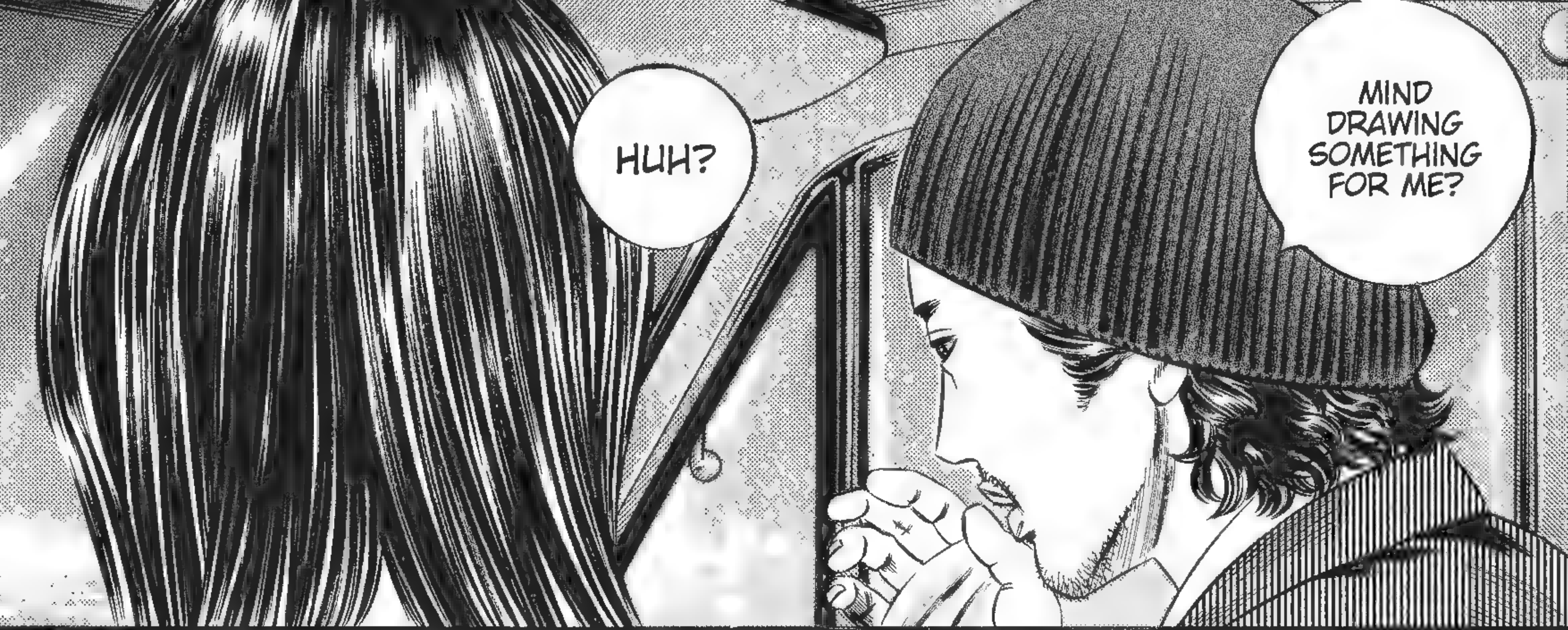


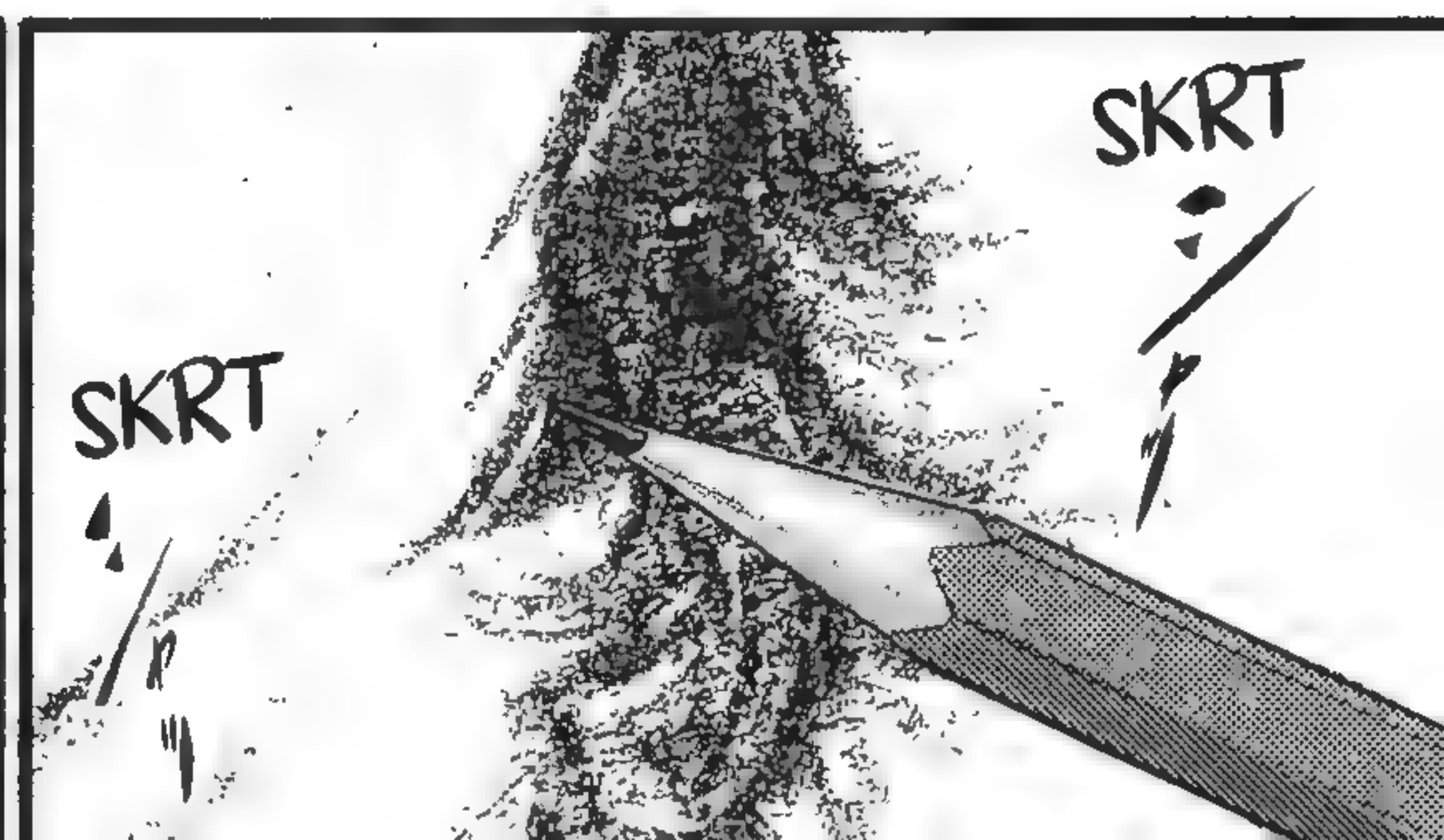


















WHEN DID
YOU GET
IT DONE,
ANYWAY?

.....
!

PRESS

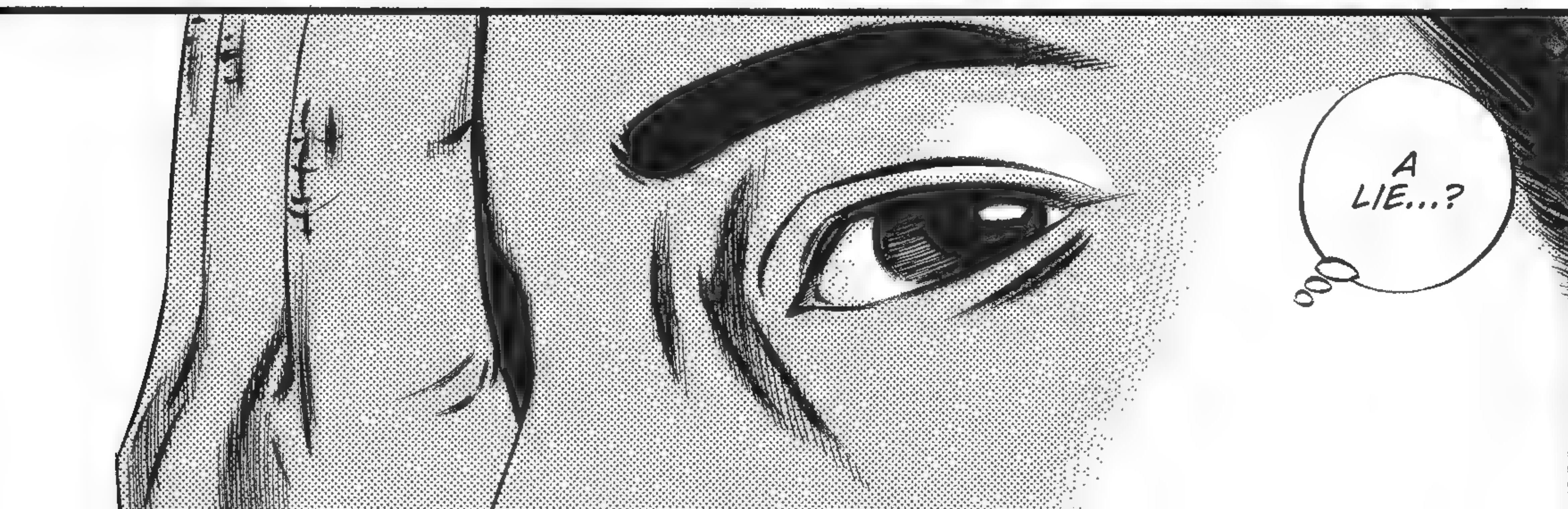


BESIDES,
PRACTICALLY
EVERYONE
GETS MINOR
THINGS LIKE
DOUBLE EYELID
SURGERY
THESE DAYS.

YOU CAN'T
JUST GO
AROUND
ASKING WOMEN
WHETHER
THEY'VE HAD
WORK DONE.



WHAT A
BOORISH
QUESTION.



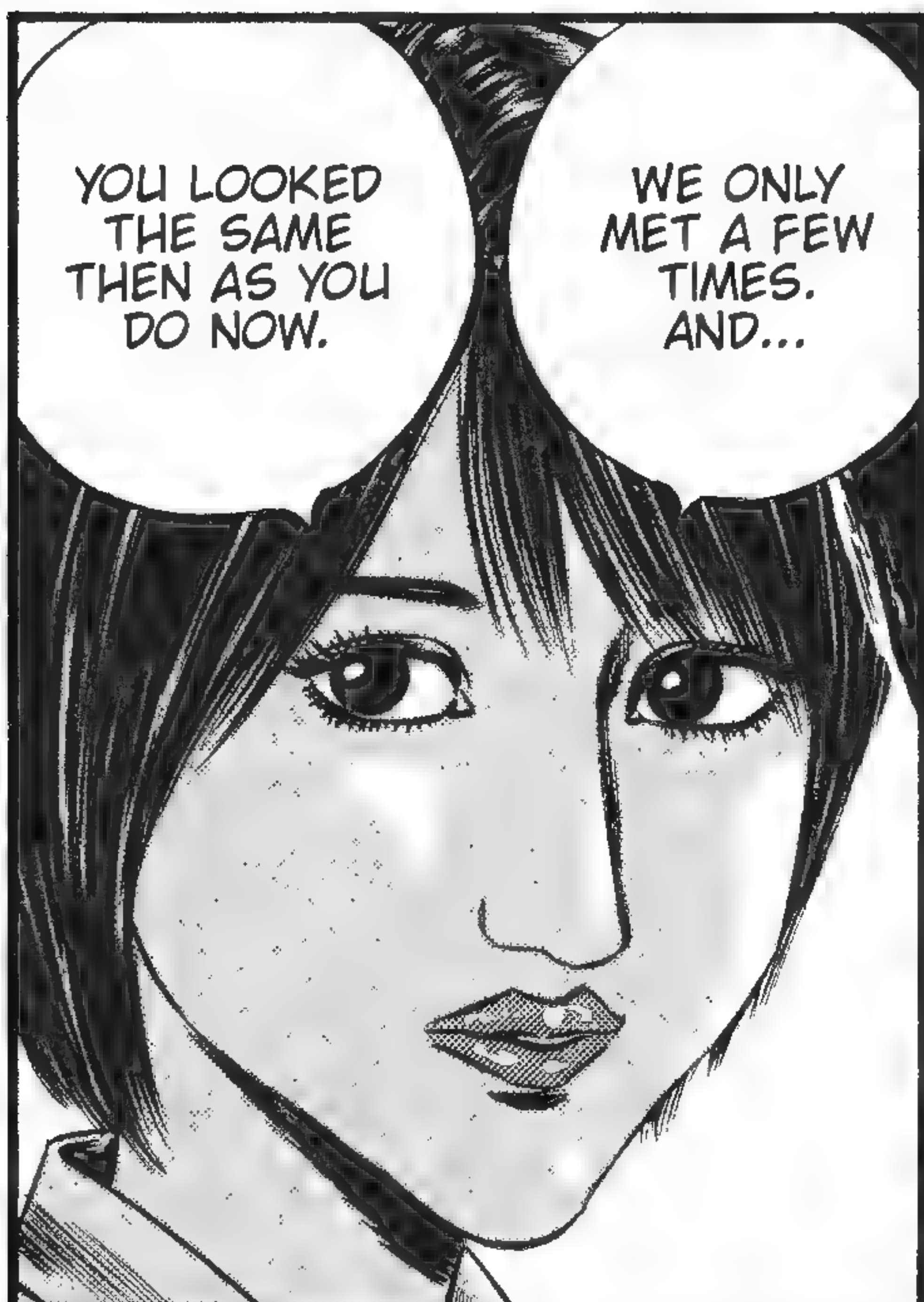
A
LIE...?



RIGHT
AFTER
YOU AND I
BROKE UP.

I CHANGED
MY FACE...

...
?!



YOU LOOKED
THE SAME
THEN AS YOU
DO NOW.

WE ONLY
MET A FEW
TIMES.
AND...



WE
WEREN'T
EXACTLY
DATING.



"BROKE
UP"?
UH...



**SHE'S
LYING.**



CONFUSING
ME WITH
ANOTHER
WOMAN,
AREN'T YOU?



YOU
REALLY
ARE...



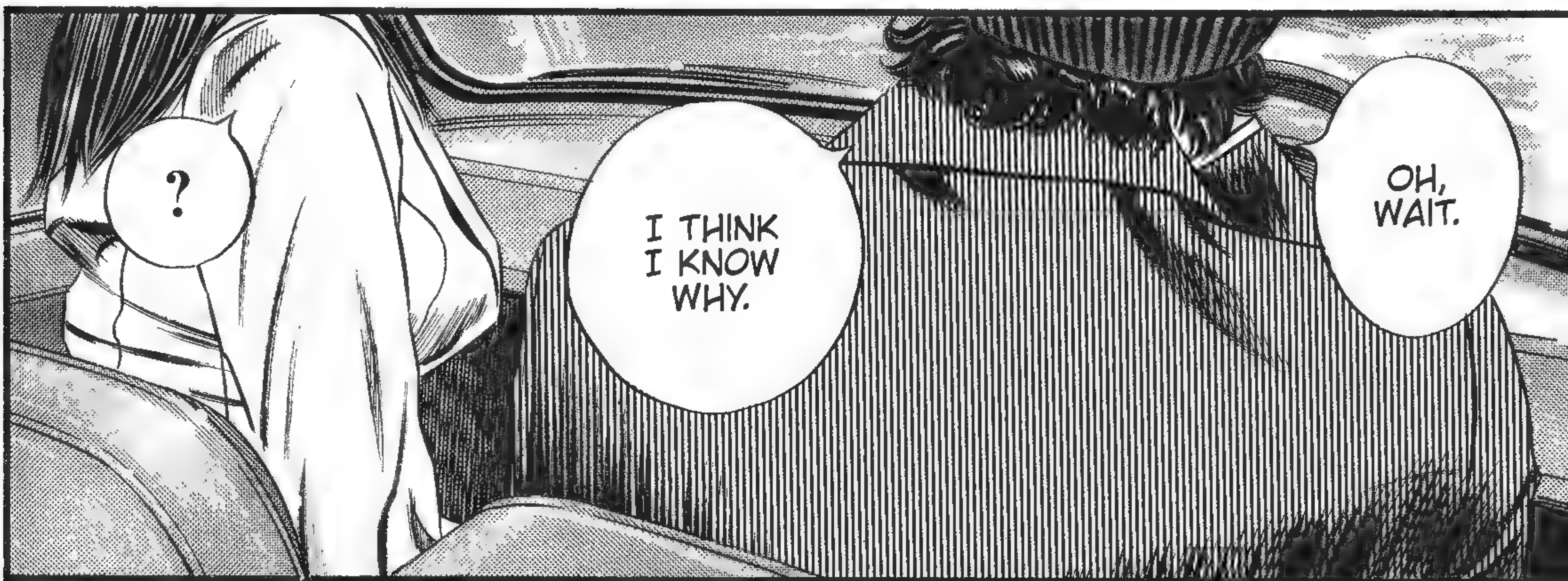
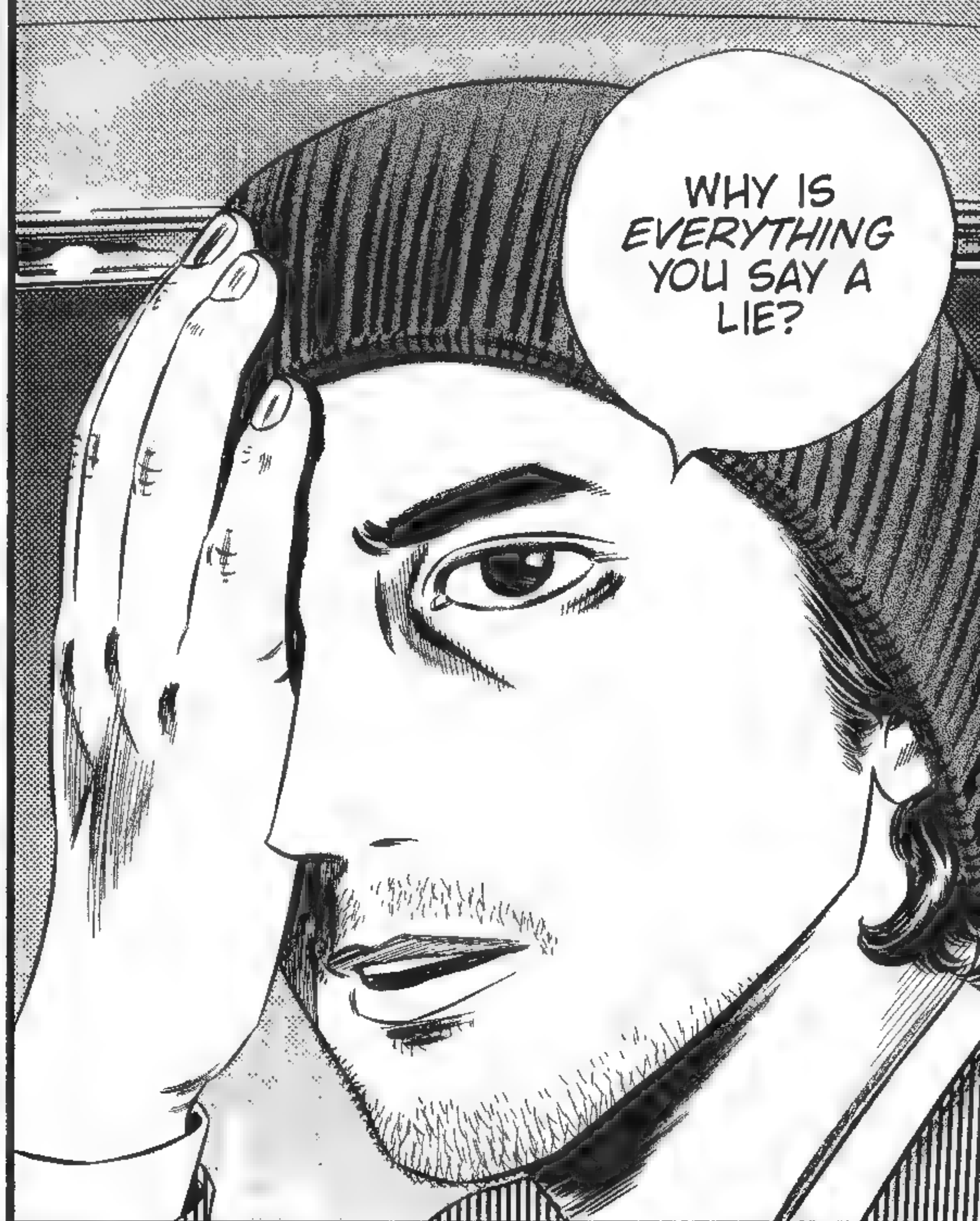
MY
GOSH,
NAKOSHI-
SAN.



LIES!

LIES
...

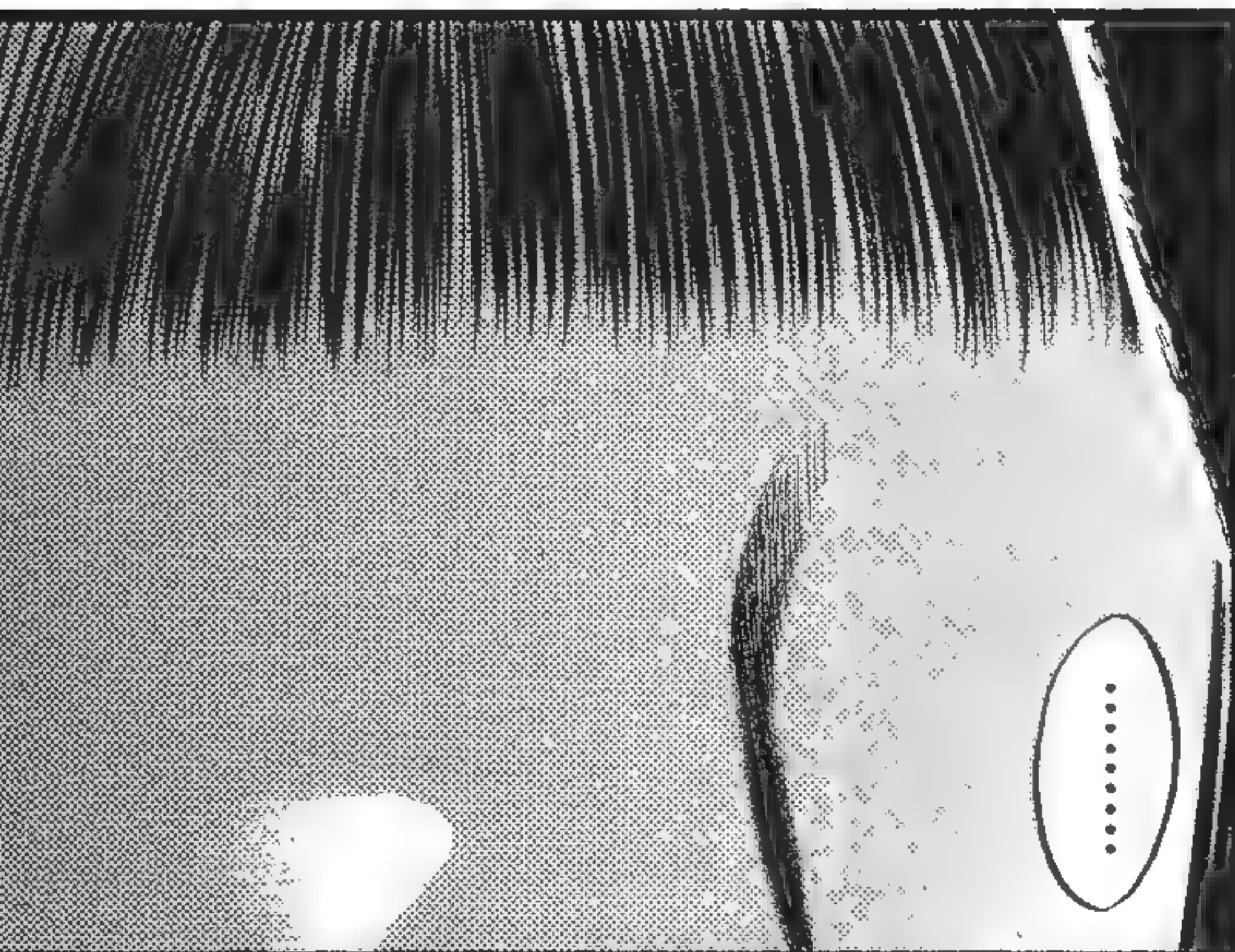
LIES
...





SO OF
COURSE
THEY'RE
ALL YOU
CAN SAY.

LIES
ARE ALL
YOU CAN
SEE...



SPEAKING
THE TRUTH
ISN'T EVEN
AN OPTION.

IF ALL YOU
CAN HEAR
ARE LIES...



THIS NEW
FACE OF
YOURS...IT'S
NOTHING.



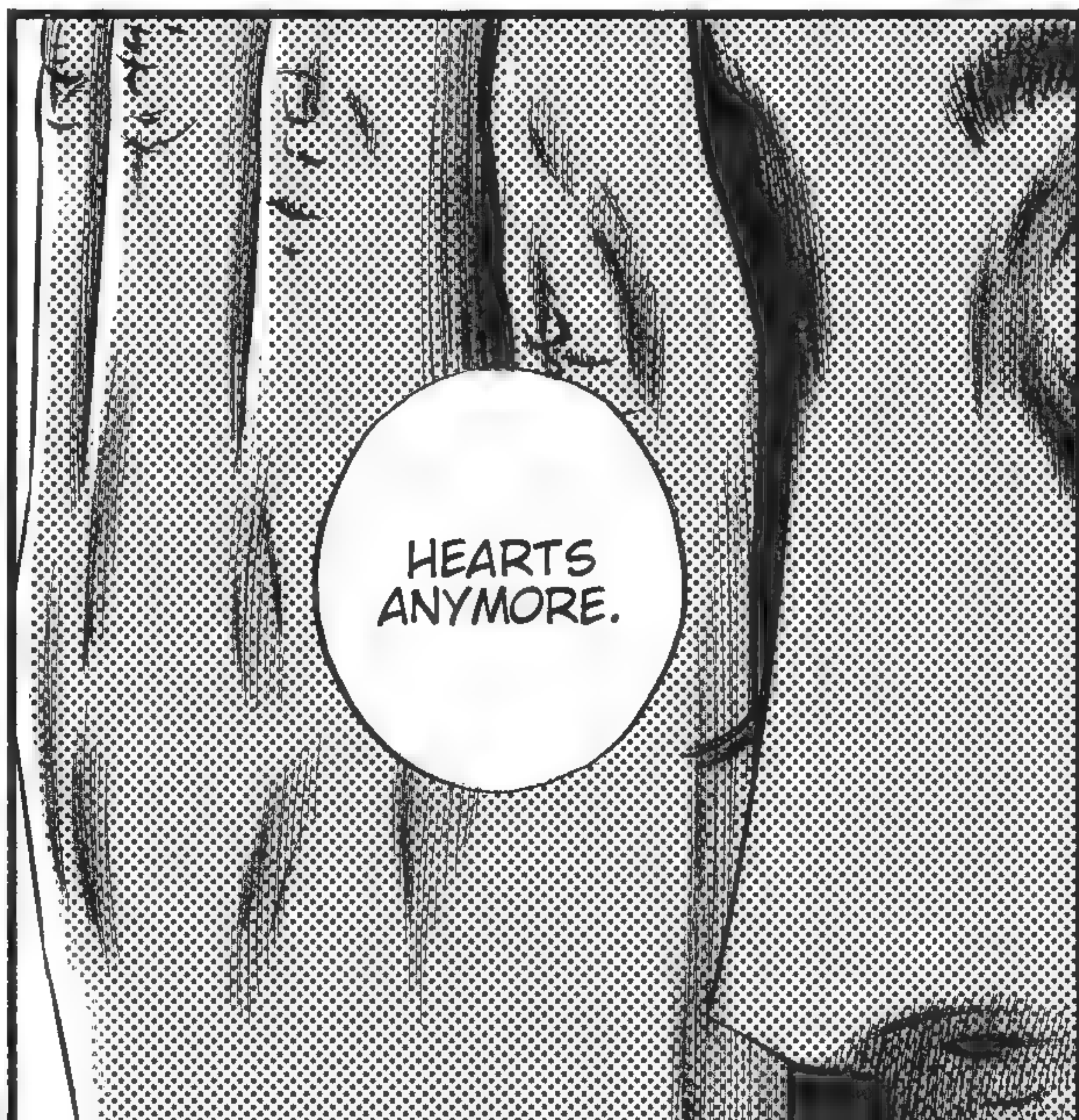
JUST A
DISHONEST
MOUTH...

AND
DISHONEST
EYES. NOT
A SINGLE
FEATURE IS
TRUE.

DISHONEST
EARS...



YOU PAID GOOD
MONEY TO BE
CARVED UP NICE,
AND ALL YOU'VE
GOT TO SHOW
FOR IT ARE
EMPTY LIES.

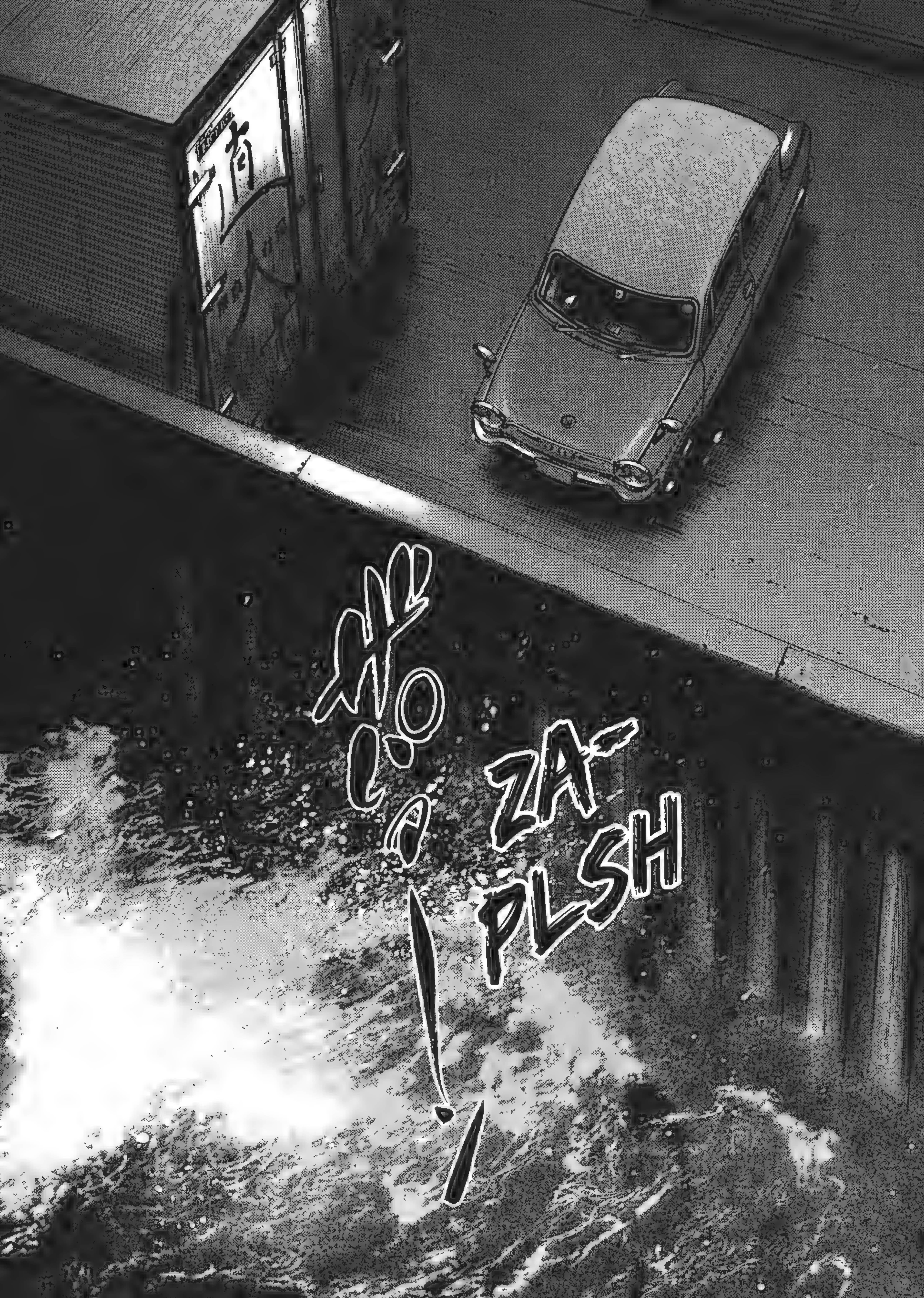


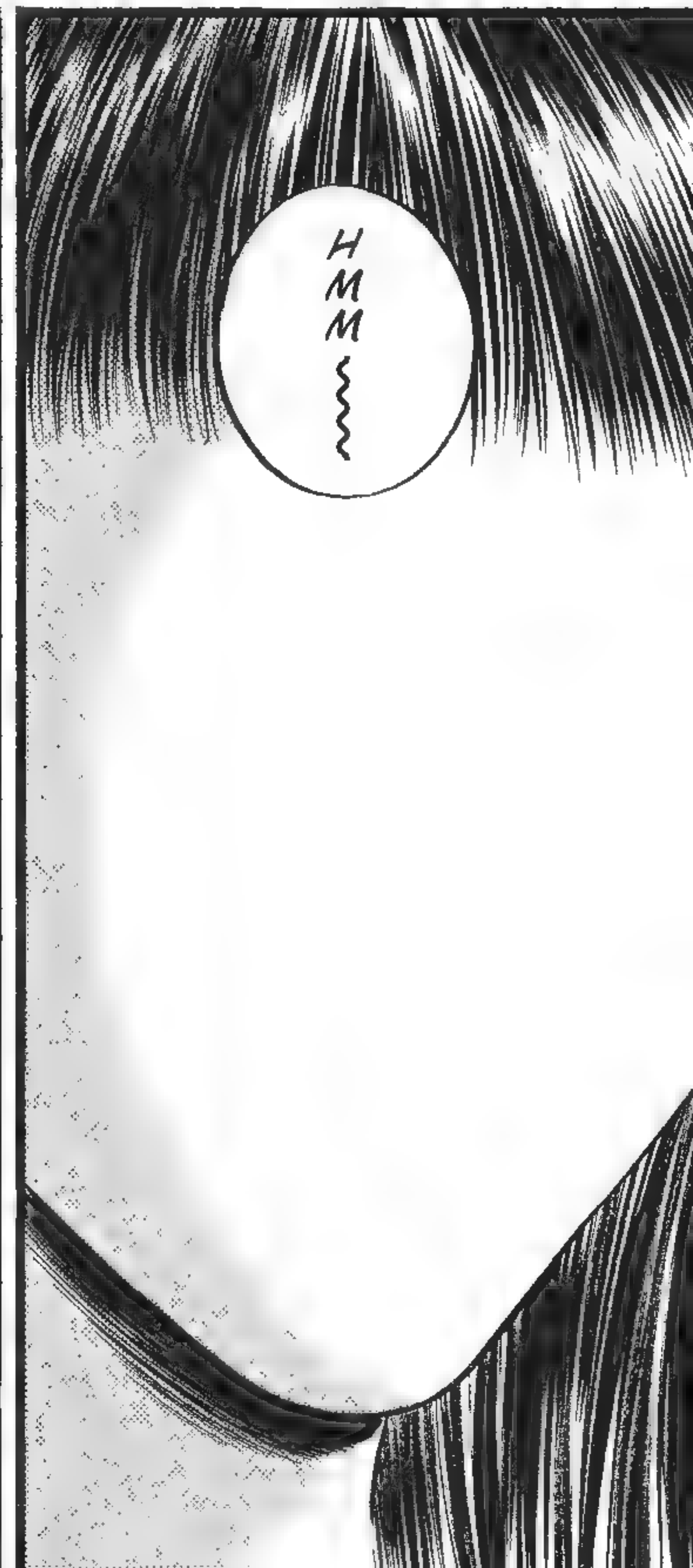
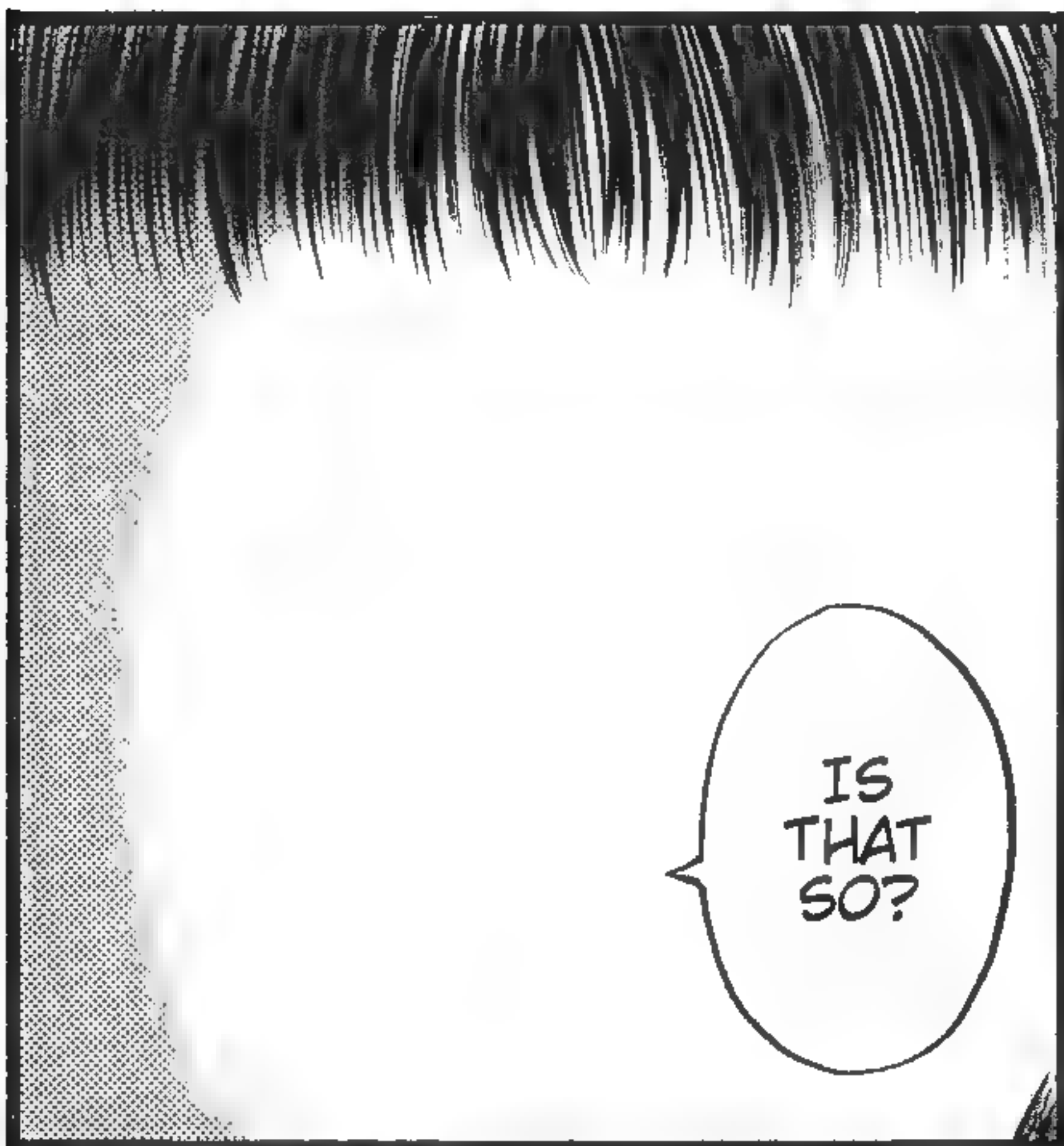
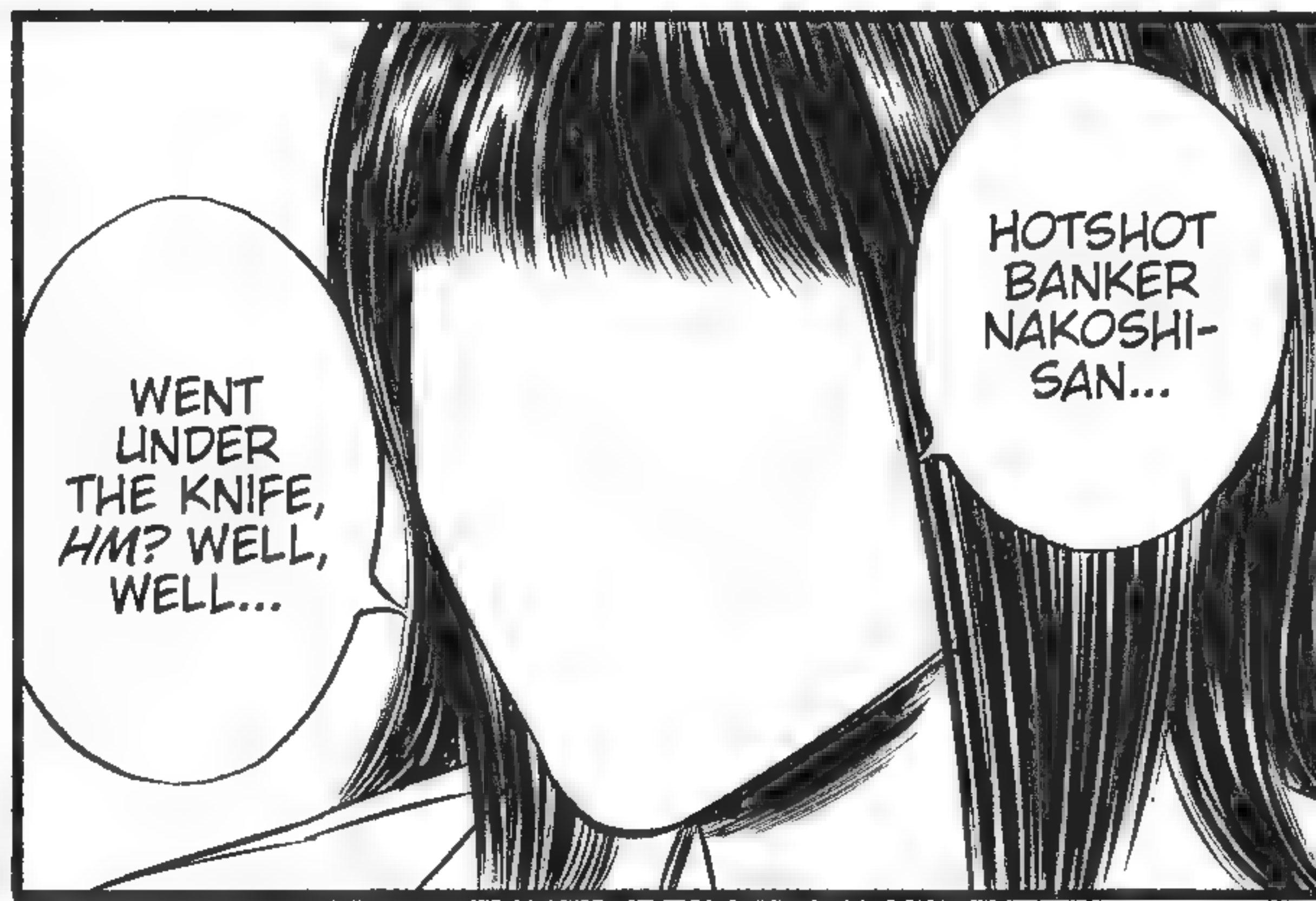


BUT YOU
ONCE SAW THE
REAL ME. IT'S
TIME I PAID YOU
BACK...

AND SAW
YOU FOR WHO
YOU REALLY
ARE!

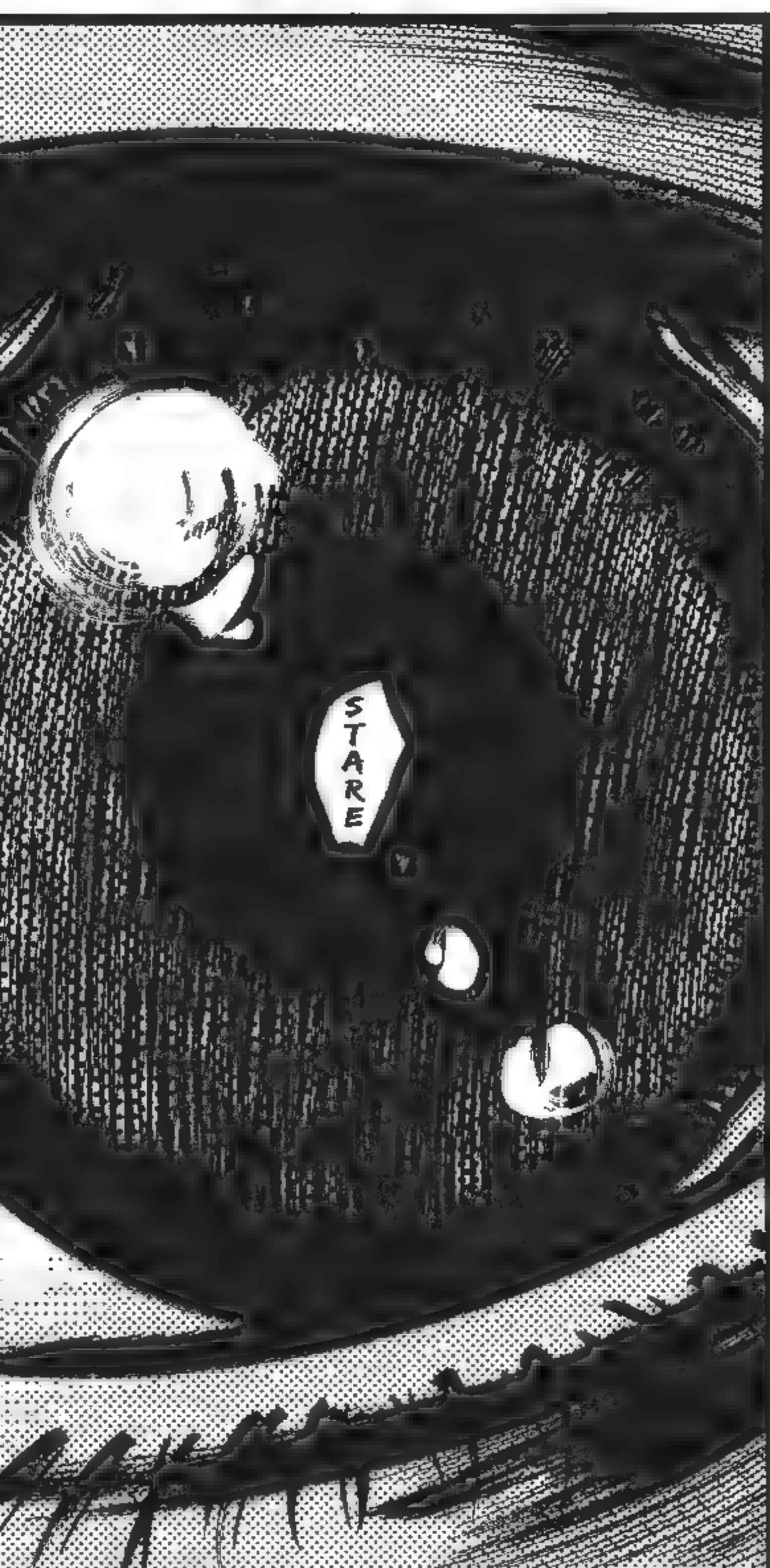






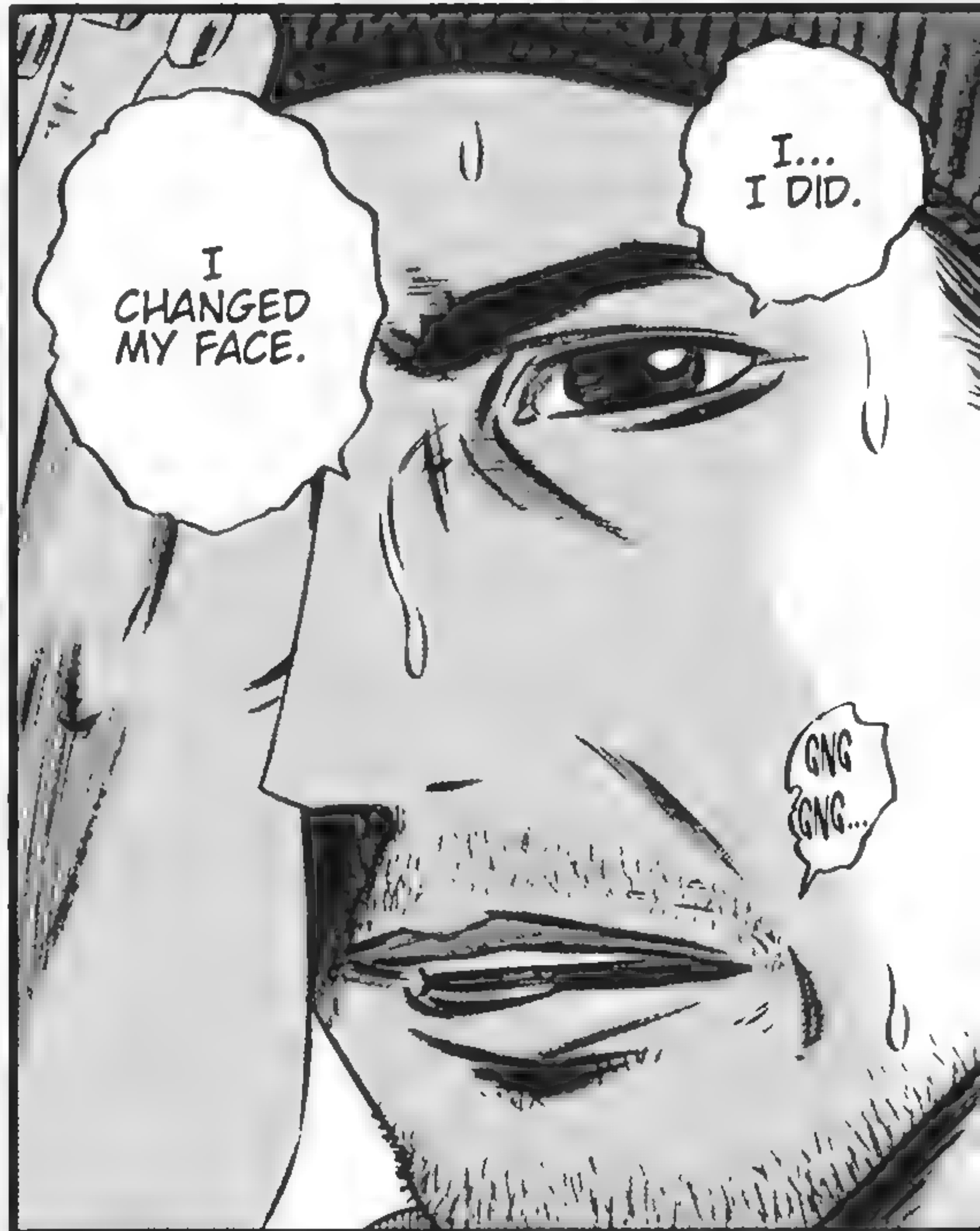
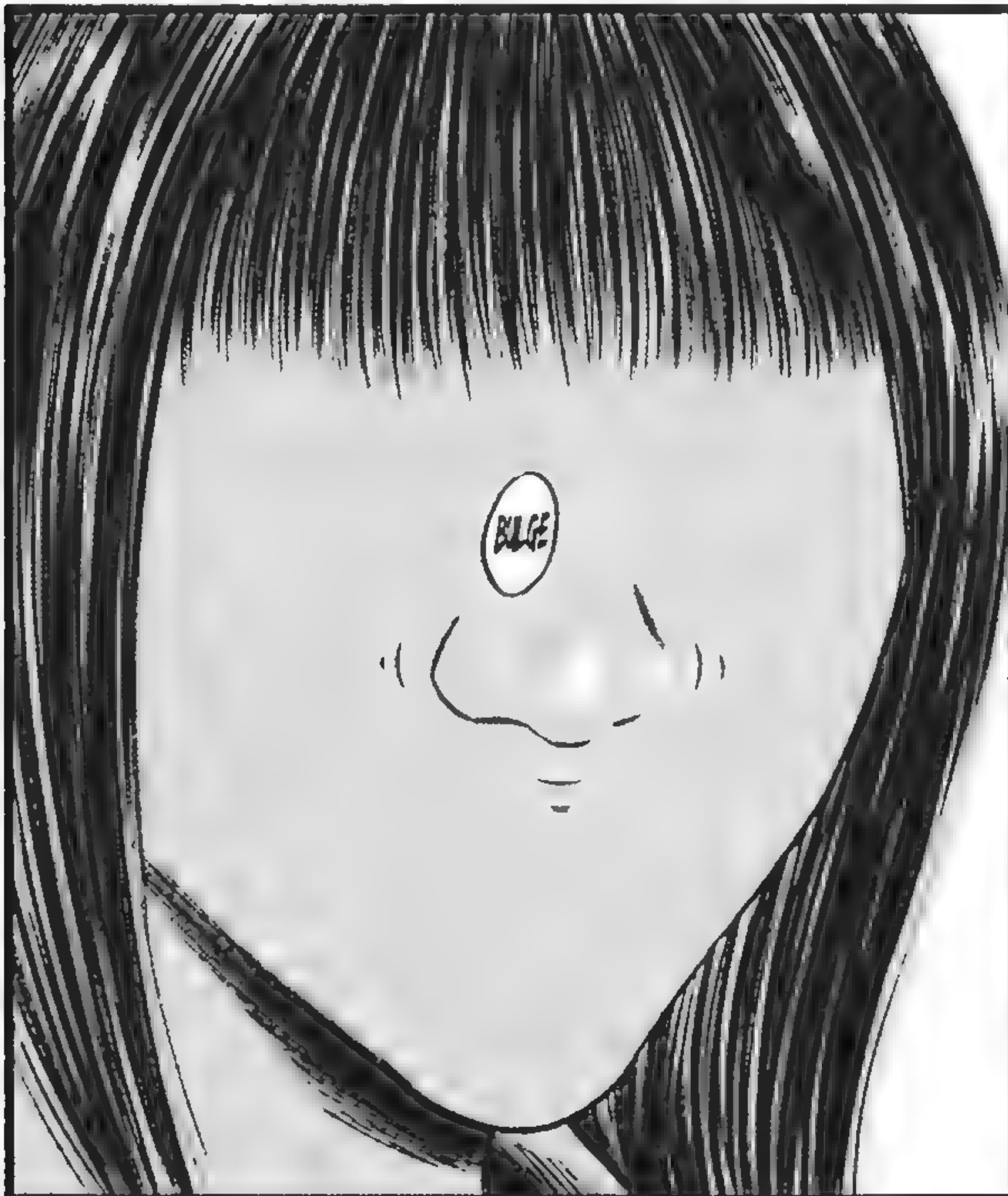
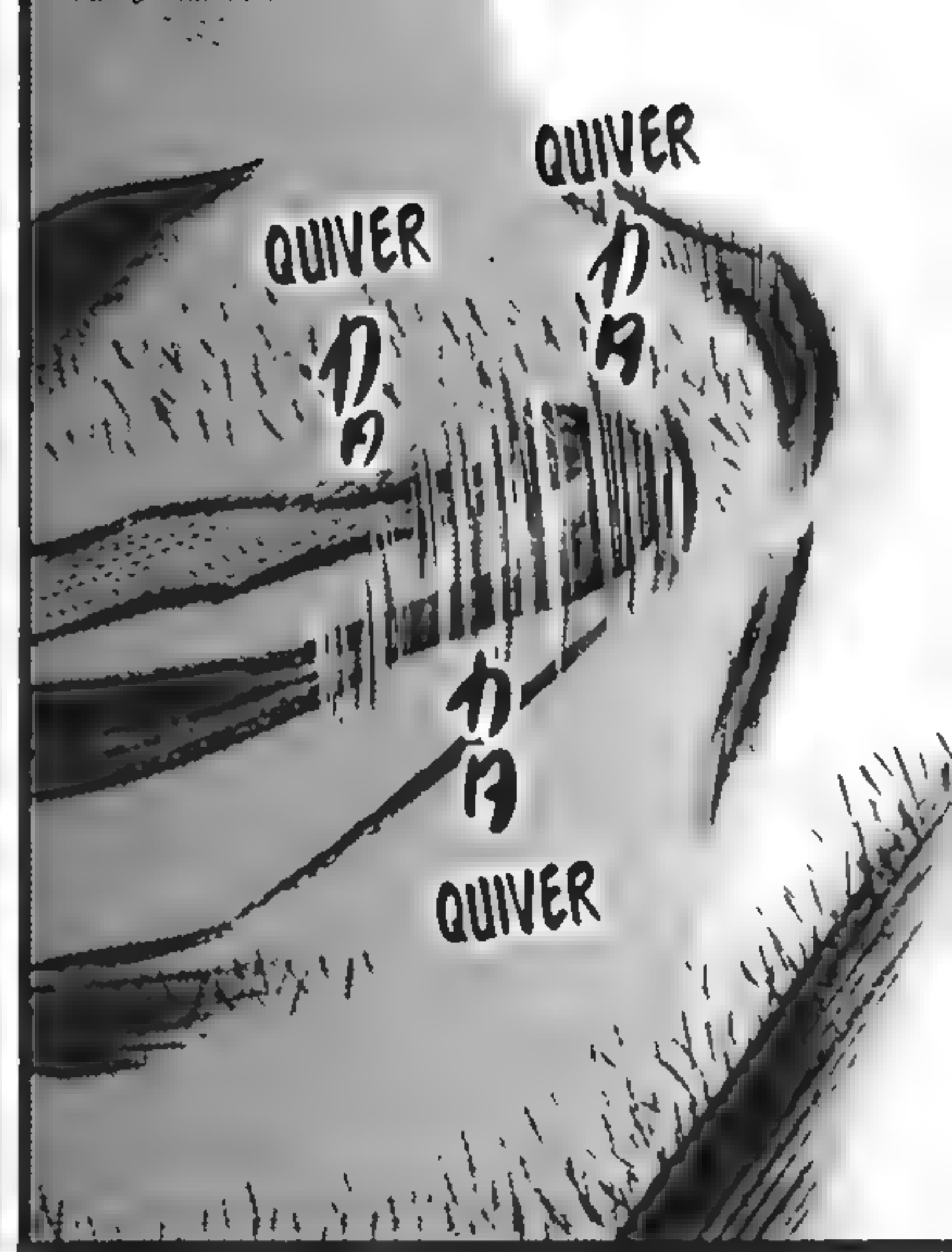


I CAN'T
READ HER
EXPRESSION
AT ALL!



"YOU
HAVE TO
TALK TO
YOUR-
SELF."

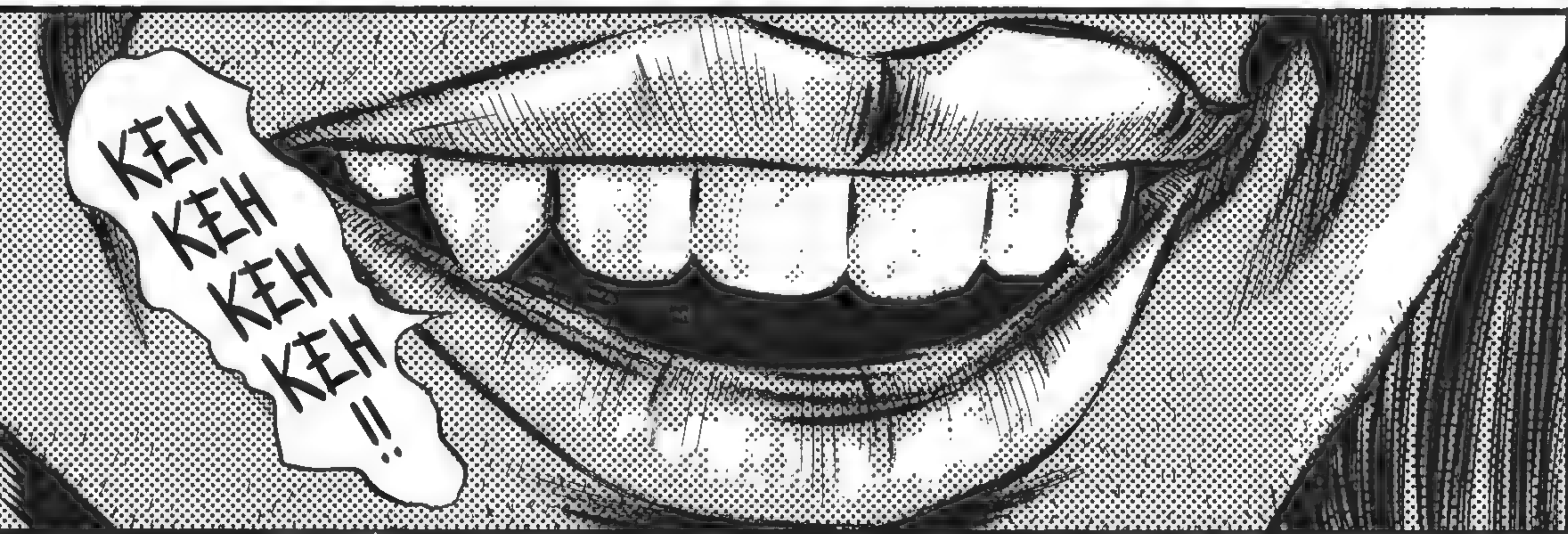
"THAT'S
PROBABLY
THE
FASTEST
WAY
TO GO
ABOUT
IT."





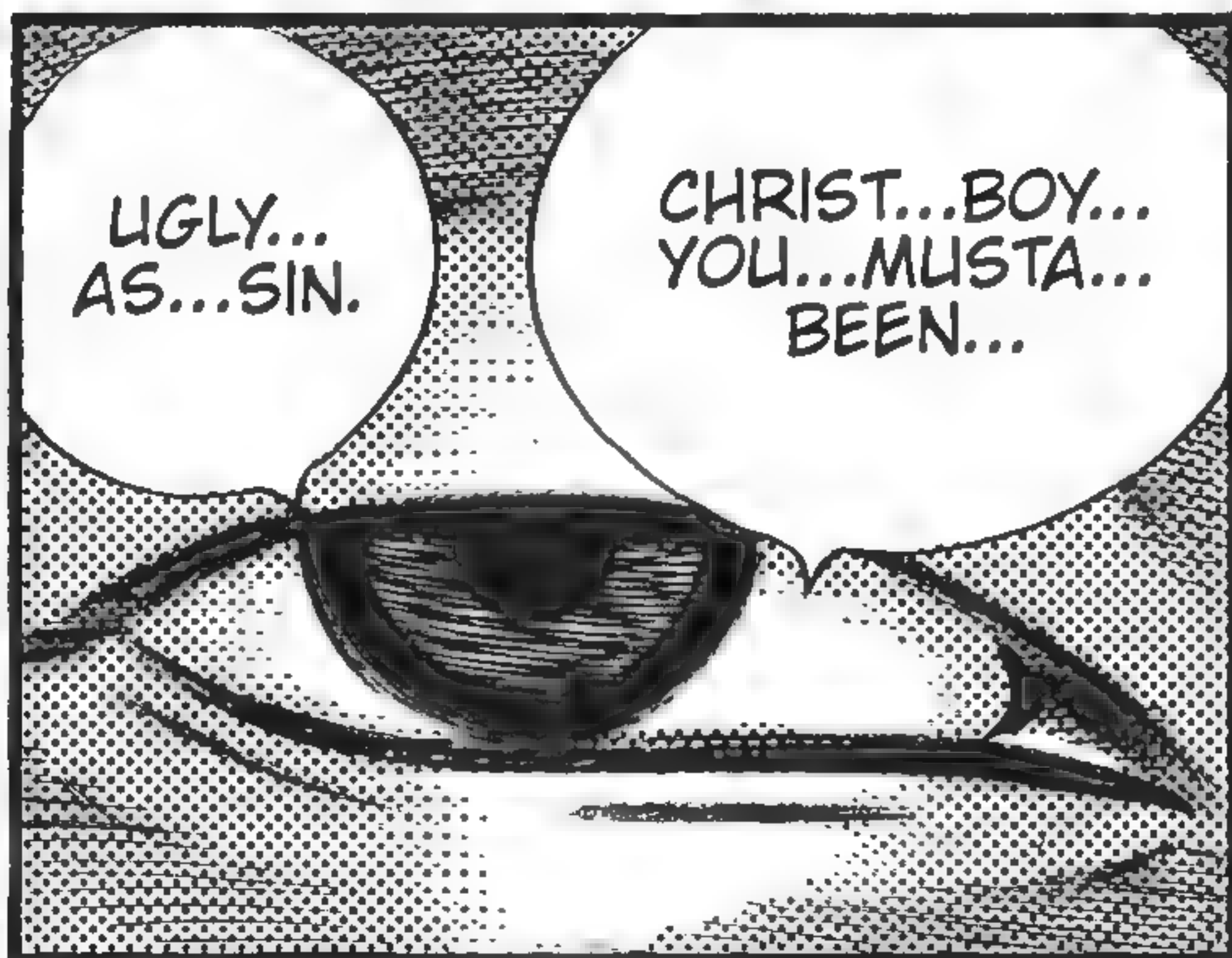
BECAUSE
I WAS
FUCKING
UGLY.

WHY THE
HELL
ELSE?!



I WAS.

Y...YEAH.



UGLY...
AS...SIN.

CHRIST...BOY...
YOU...MUSTA...
BEEN...





YOU'RE
THE
ONE...

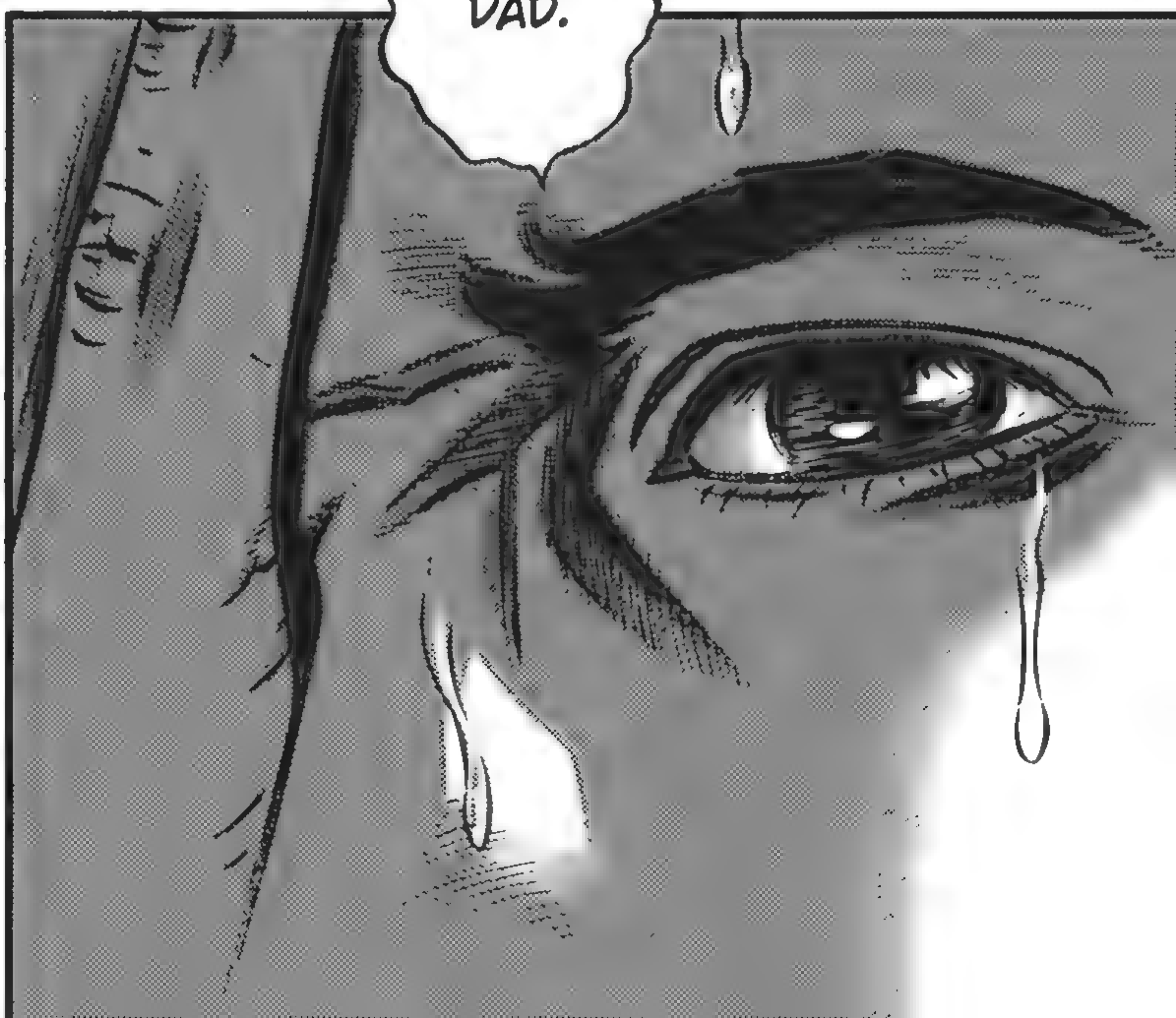
WHO
TAUGHT
ME
THAT...

DAD.



BACK...

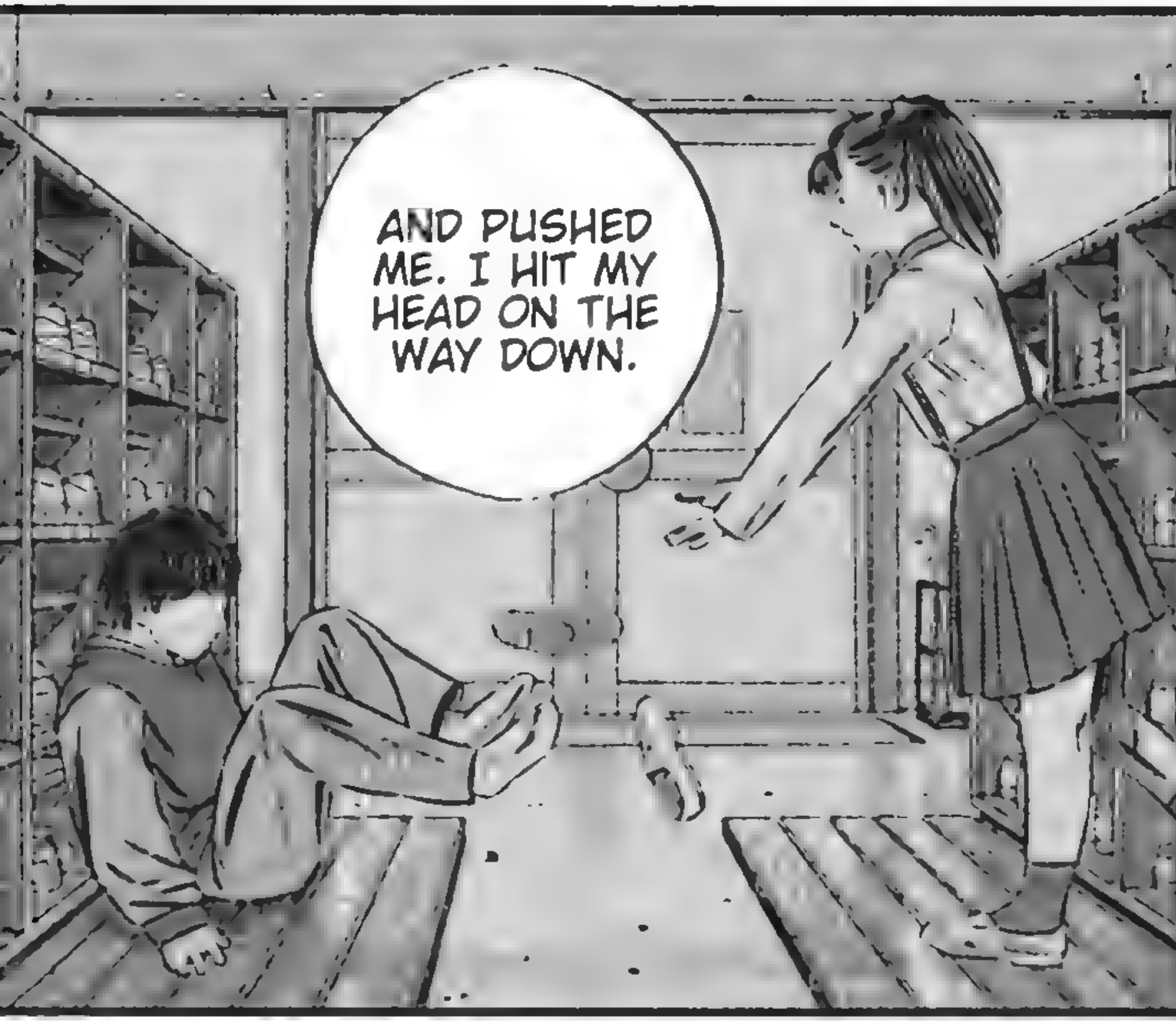
IN EL-
EMENTARY
SCHOOL...





PUT ON
THIS GIRL'S
SHOES BY
MISTAKE.

I WENT TO
THE WRONG
CUBBY.



AND PUSHED
ME. I HIT MY
HEAD ON THE
WAY DOWN.



SHE TOLD
ME I WAS
"UGLY" AND
"CREEPY"...

WHEN
SHE SAW
ME...



IT WAS THE
WORD THAT
ECHOED IN MY
BRAIN. "UGLY."
IT WAS LIKE
A SUCKER
PUNCH.

BUT,
HOWEVER LOUD
MY SKULL
BOUNCING OFF
THE CUBBY
MIGHT'VE
BEEN...



WHEN I GOT HOME, MY DAD SAW MY HEAD WOUND...

AND DRAGGED ME OVER TO THAT GIRL'S HOUSE SO HE COULD YELL AT HER PARENTS.



"BUT THAT AIN'T THE POINT!"

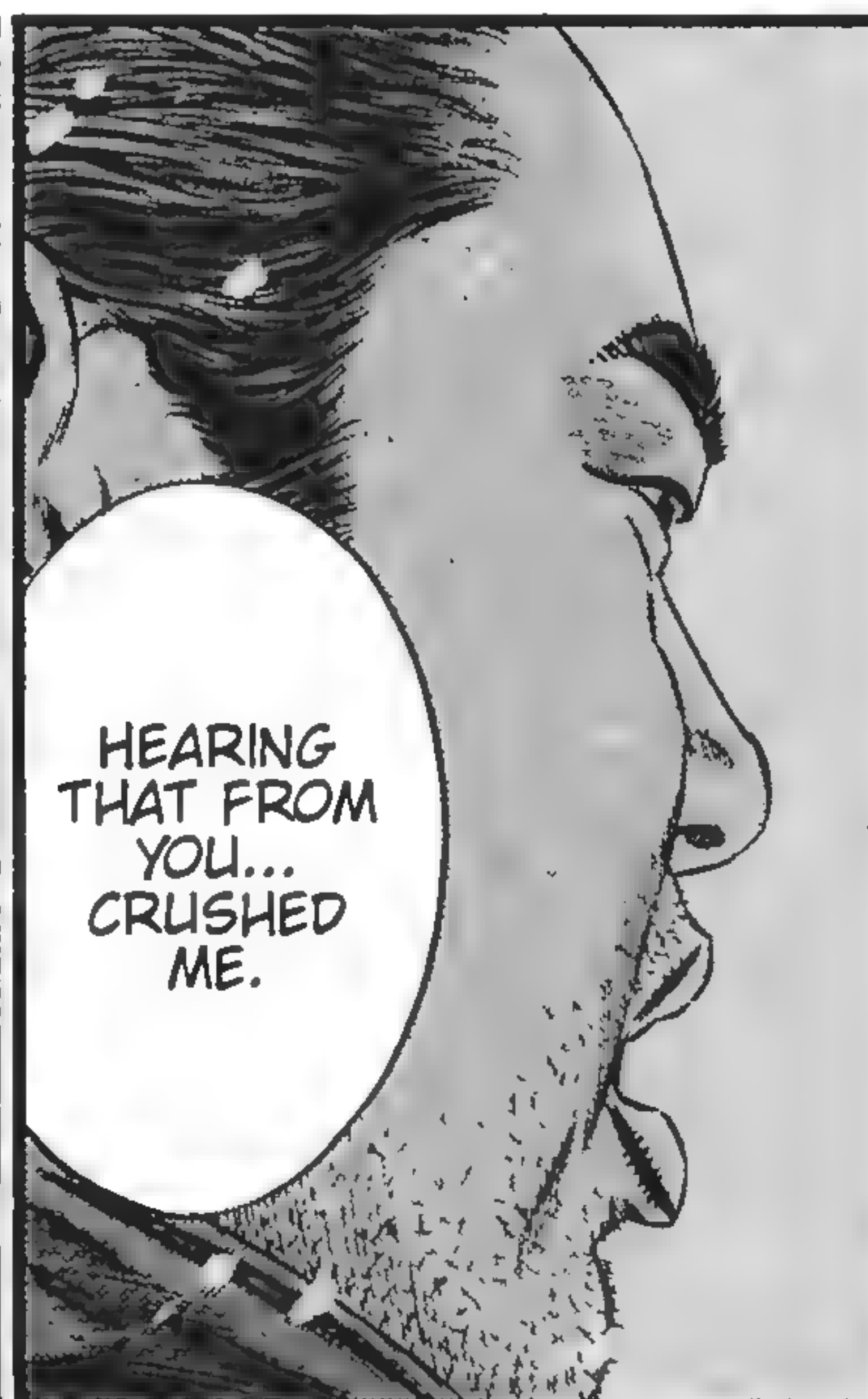
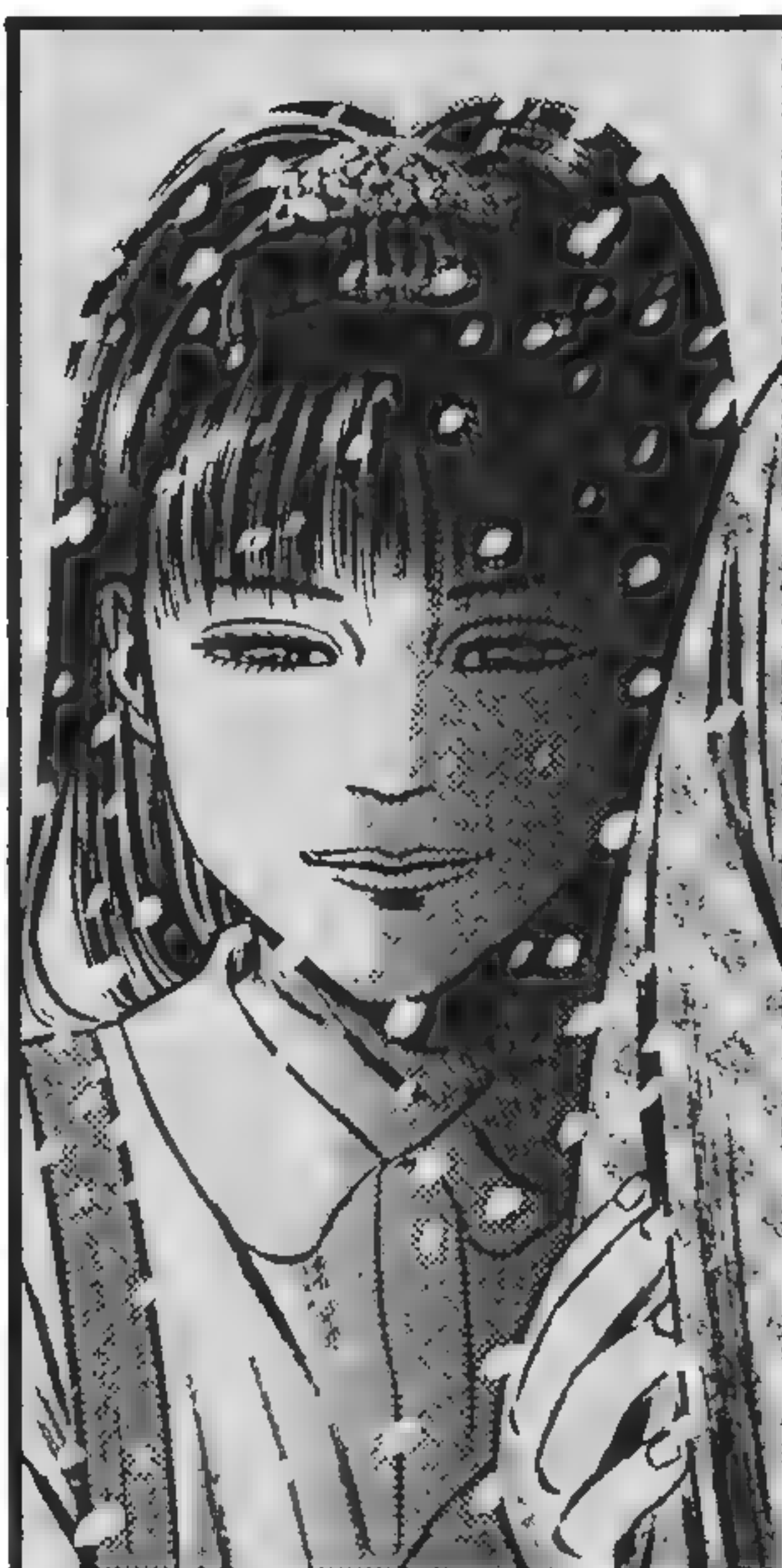
MY DAD RESPONDED, "WELL, OF COURSE MY KID'S UGLY! HE'S UGLY AS SIN!"



EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS CLEARLY IN THE WRONG, HER DAD GOT MAD AT US. "SO WHAT IF SHE CALLED YOUR BRAT UGLY?" HE SAID. "HE IS UGLY!"



I WAS RIGHT
BEHIND YOU
THE WHOLE
TIME, DAD.



HEARING
THAT FROM
YOU...
CRUSHED
ME.



I DECIDED I
DIDN'T HAVE
A FATHER.

THAT
WAS THE
MOMENT...





FROM THEN
ON, I KEPT
MY HEAD
DOWN, LIKE I
WAS HIDING
MY FACE...

THAT'S
RIGHT.

AND EVERY-
WHERE I WENT,
I KEPT MY
EYES GLUED
ON MY OWN
TWO FEET.





THOSE
DAYS
WERE
SO
EMPTY.



IF A LIVELY
CHILD COULD
BE COMPARED
TO A STRONG
WIND...

AND AN
ANGSTY TEEN
TO A SLOW,
HALTING
WIND...

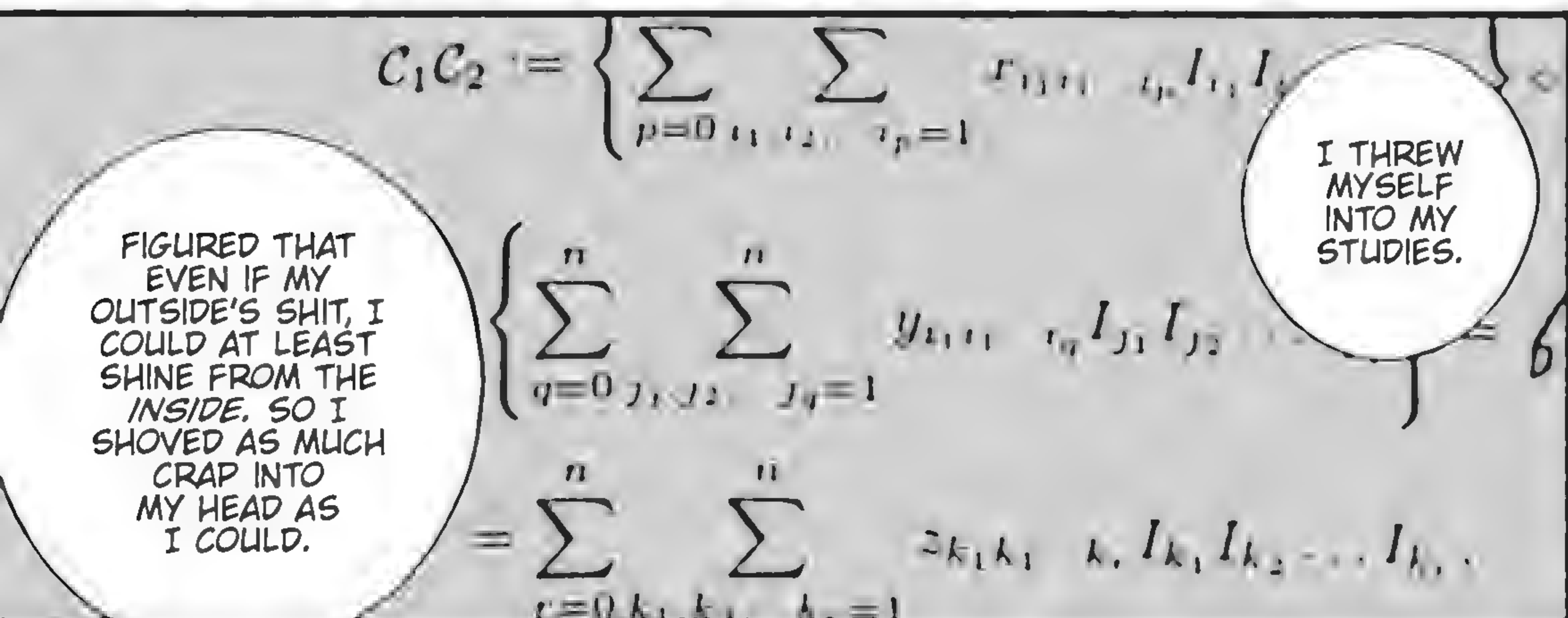
THEN I WAS
STAGNANT AIR.
SOMETHING SO
STILL AND EMPTY
YOU MIGHT NEVER
REALIZE IT EXISTS
AT ALL.



WERE SCHOOL
SUPPLIES,
PORNO MAGS,
AND MY OWN
TWO SHOES.



THE ONLY
THINGS I
LET INTO
MY SIGHT
IN THOSE
DAYS...



FIGURED THAT
EVEN IF MY
OUTSIDE'S SHIT, I
COULD AT LEAST
SHINE FROM THE
INSIDE. SO I
SHOVED AS MUCH
CRAP INTO
MY HEAD AS
I COULD.

I THREW
MYSELF
INTO MY
STUDIES.



LEARNED
HOW TO MAKE
MYSELF PUKE
WHEN I ATE
TOO MUCH.



COULDN'T
HELP MY FACE,
BUT I COULD
CONTROL MY
BODY...

SO I
STARTED
WORKING
OUT EVERY
DAY.



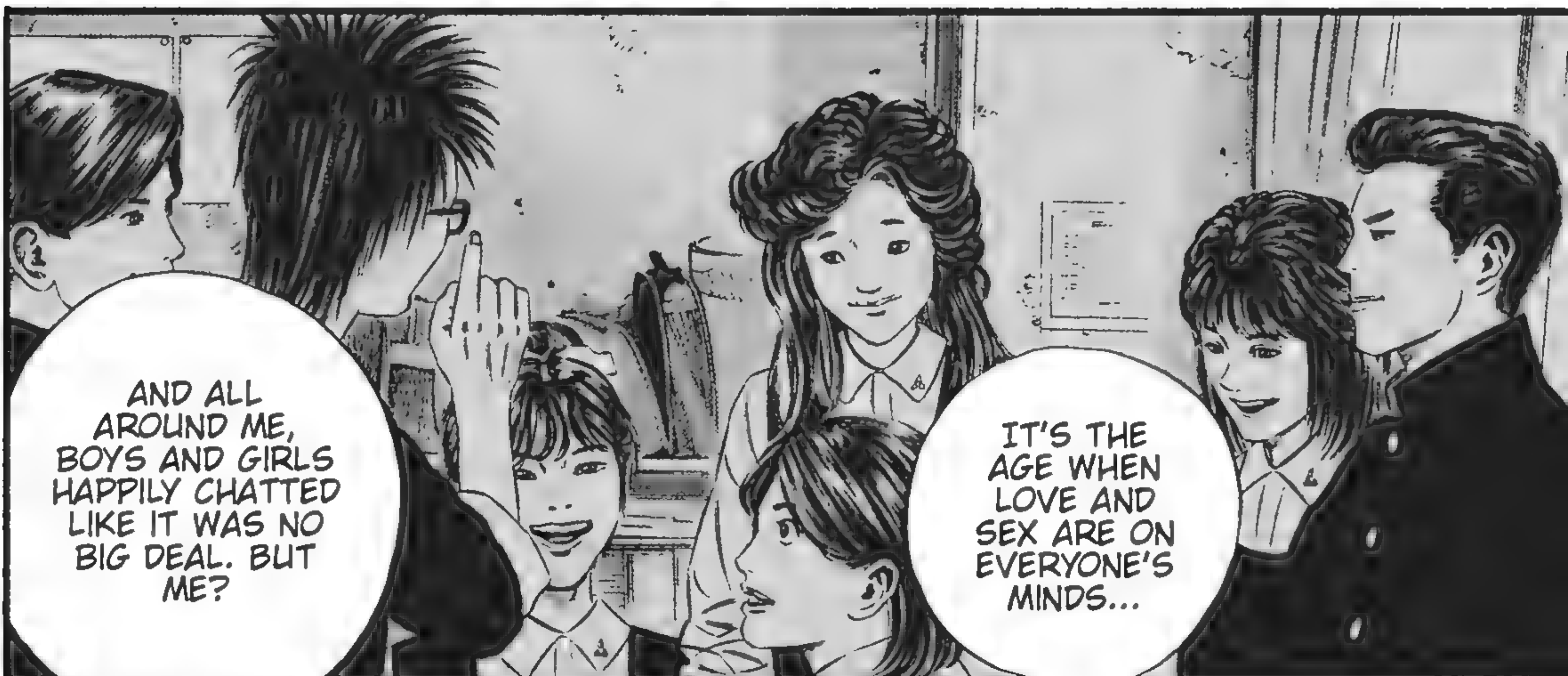
TO THE
OTHER
KIDS...

I WAS
JUST SOME
GROSS,
UGLY
BOOKWORM.



I KEPT MY
HEAD HUNG
LOW AND
STUDIED ALL
DAY, EVEN
DURING
BREAKS.

IN HIGH
SCHOOL...



AND ALL
AROUND ME,
BOYS AND GIRLS
HAPPILY CHATTED
LIKE IT WAS NO
BIG DEAL. BUT
ME?

IT'S THE
AGE WHEN
LOVE AND
SEX ARE ON
EVERYONE'S
MINDS...



!!



I JUST...

SHOT THEM
JEALOUS
GLANCES
FROM THE
CORNER OF
MY EYE.



?!



TH...

THE
WORST WERE
GUYS LIKE YOU.
SHALLOW, PRETTY,
SWOONED OVER
BY EVERY GIRL--
THERE WAS ONE
IN EVERY
CLASS.

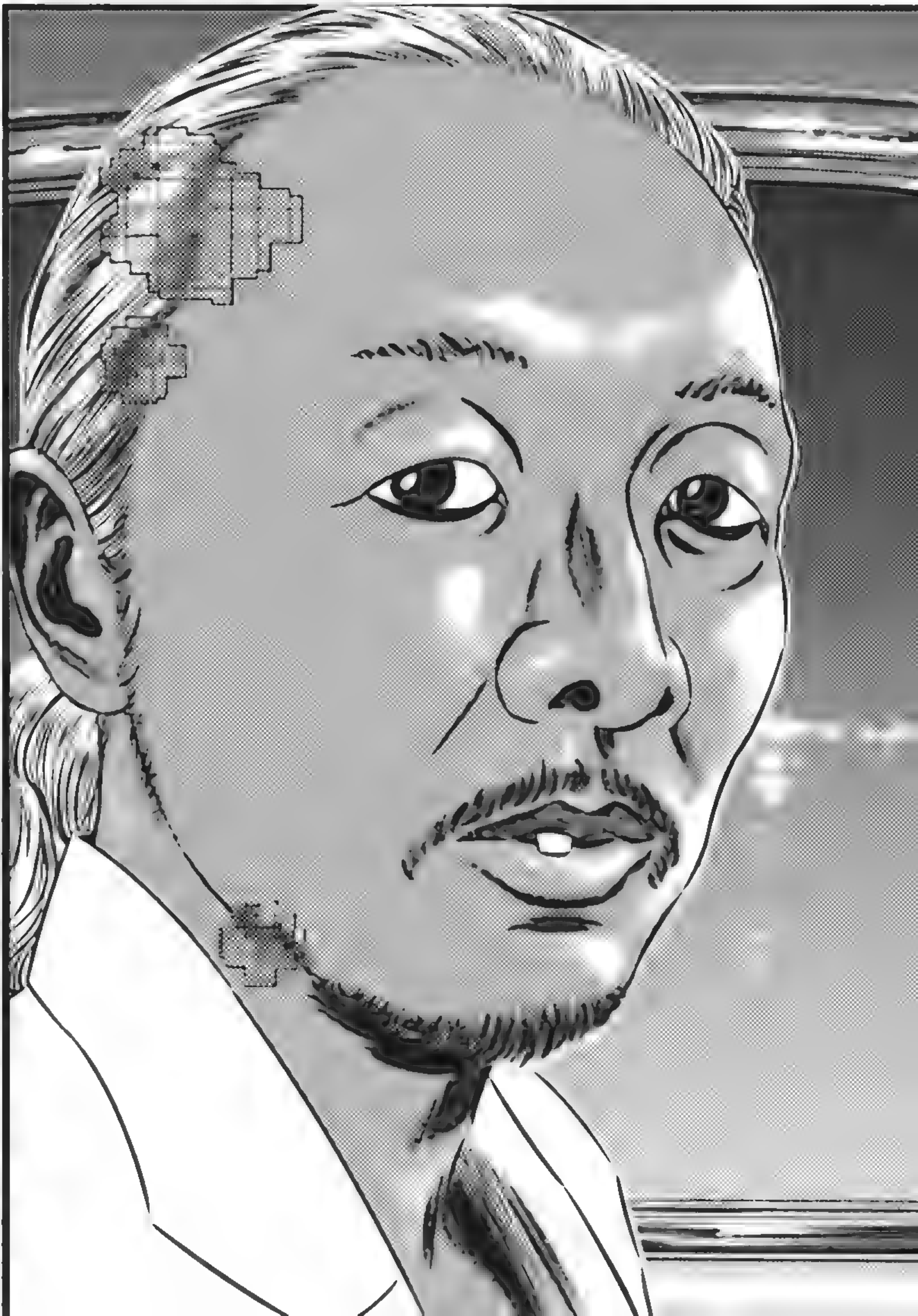
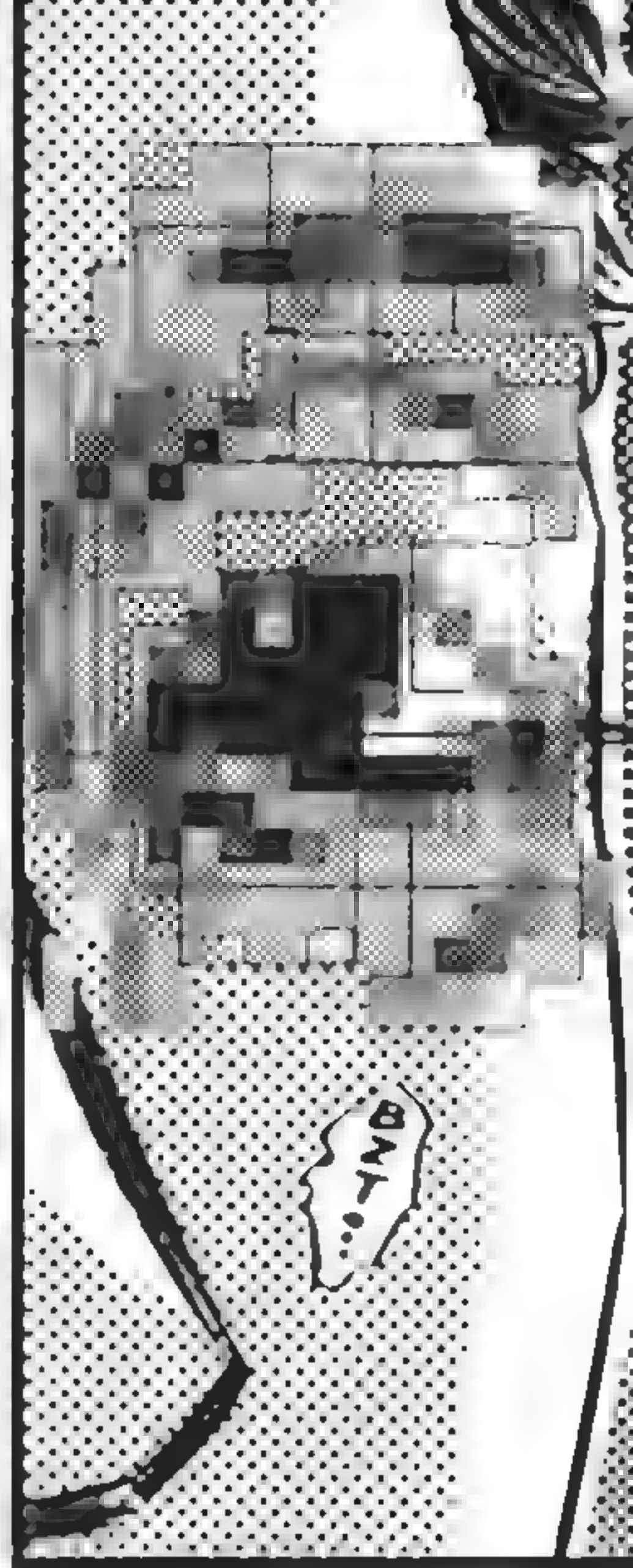
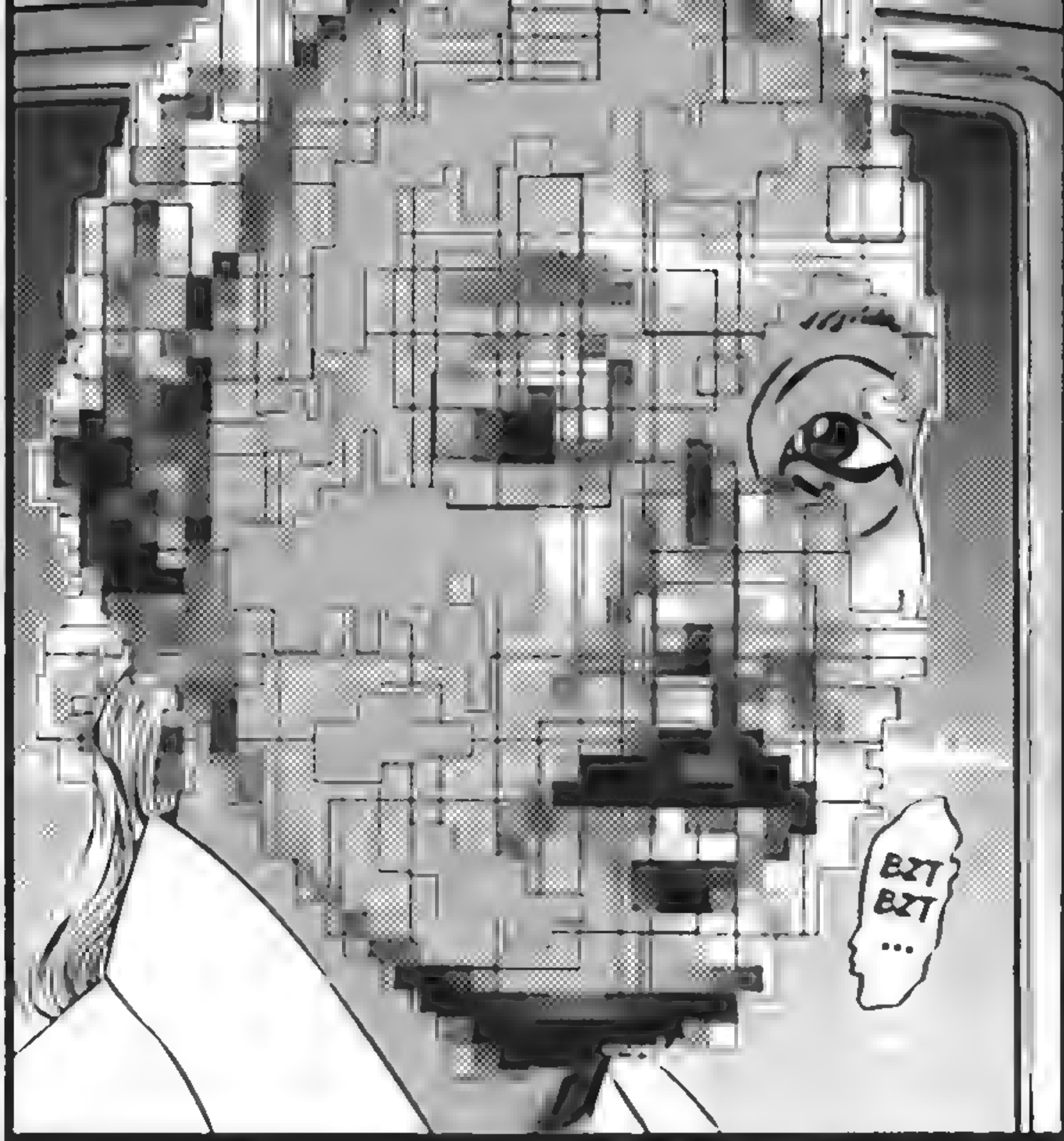


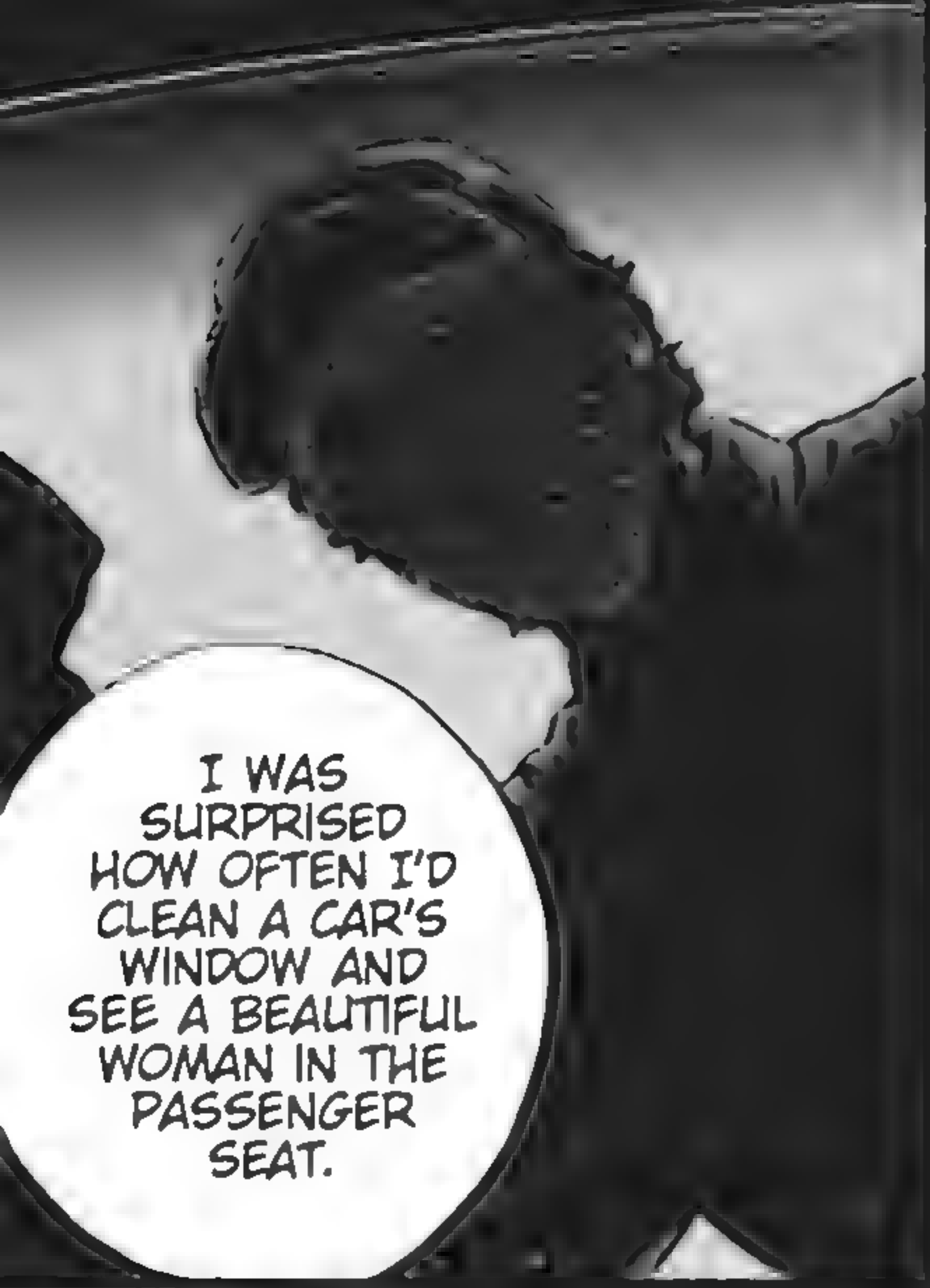
SO STOP
LOOKING AT
THAT BRAINLESS,
EMPTY MORON
AND LOOK AT
ME!!



I'D LOOK AT
YOU AND THINK,
"WHAT'S SO
GREAT ABOUT
HIM? ALL HE'S
GOT IS HIS FACE."

I MOCKED
YOU IN MY HEAD
LIKE THAT.
"NO DEPTH,
NO SUBSTANCE.
I'VE GOT WAY
MORE VALUE
THAN THAT
VAPID PRICK."





I WAS
SURPRISED
HOW OFTEN I'D
CLEAN A CAR'S
WINDOW AND
SEE A BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN IN THE
PASSENGER
SEAT.



WHEN I WAS
WORKING
PART-TIME
AT THE GAS
STATION...



THE
PRETTIER
THE GIRL.



AND THE
FANCIER
THE CAR...

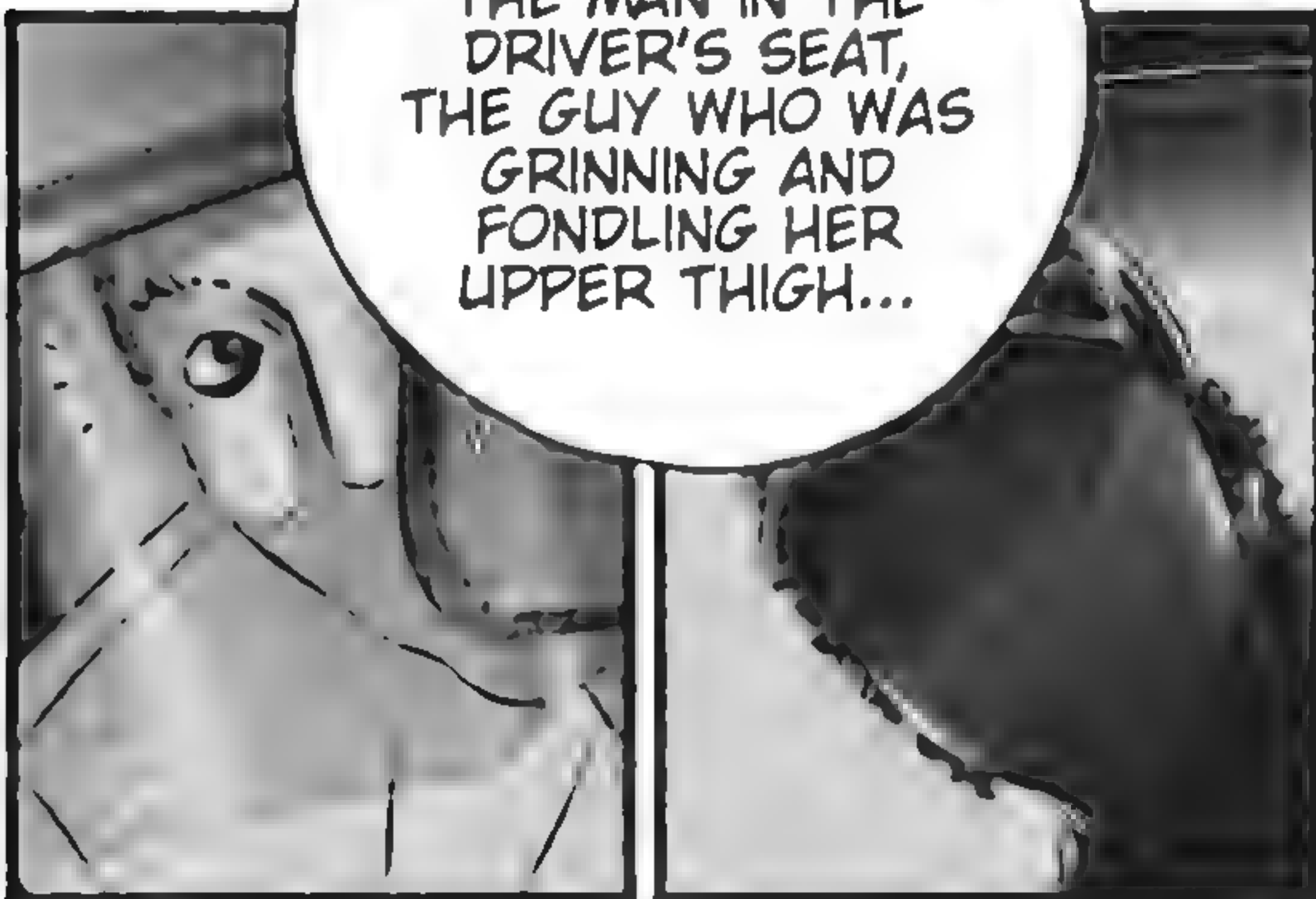


I WAS
WORKING
ON THIS
PORSCHÉ, AND
GLANCED AT
THE WOMAN
INSIDE.

THEN,
ONE
DAY...



BUT WHAT
REALLY STRUCK
ME WAS HOW
THE MAN IN THE
DRIVER'S SEAT,
THE GUY WHO WAS
GRINNING AND
FONDLING HER
UPPER THIGH...



SHE WAS
RADIANT.



WAS
ABSOLUTELY
HIDEOUS.





HOW COULD
AN UGLY PIG
LIKE YOU...

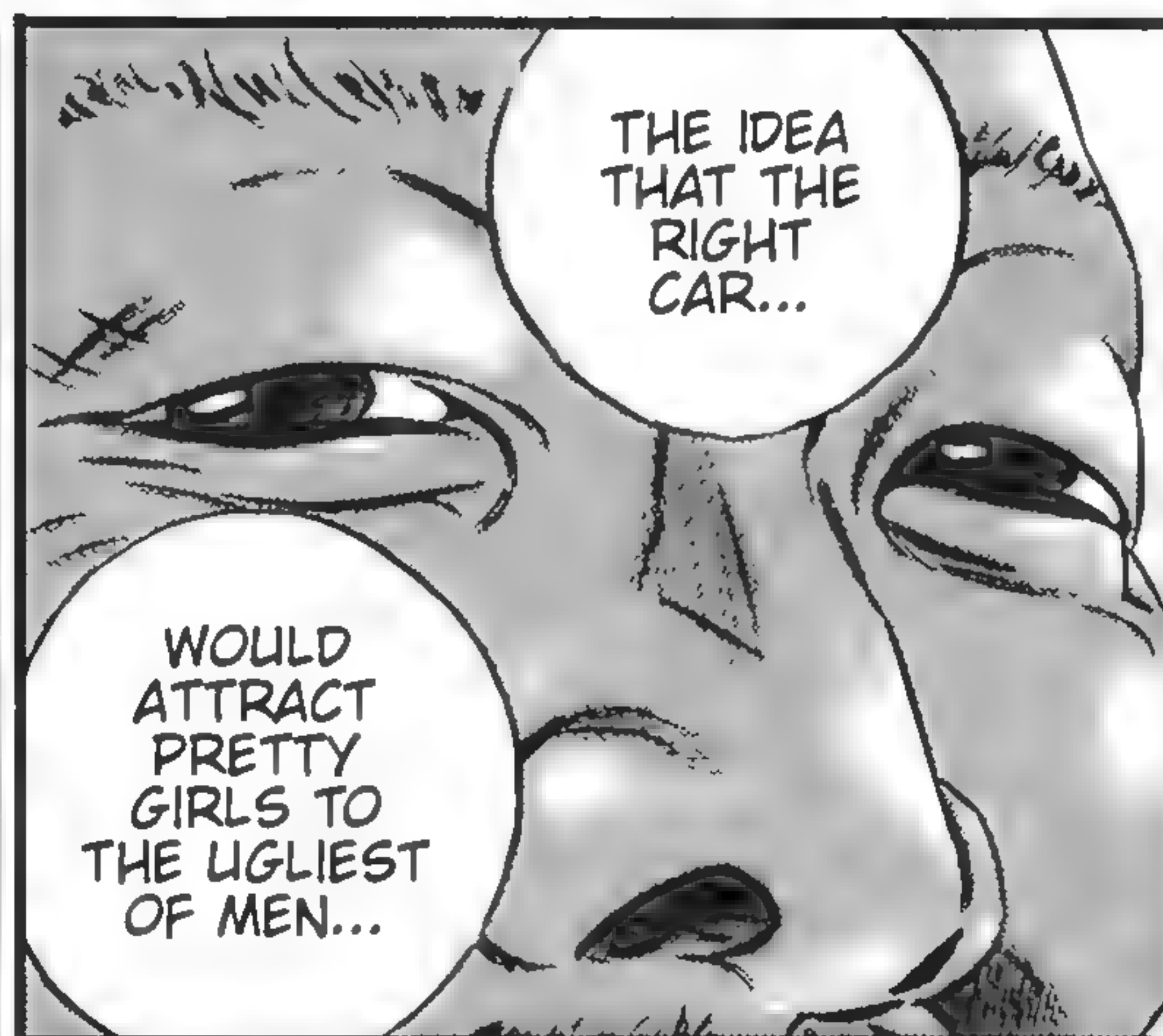
I MEAN,
HOW?

GET SUCH A
BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN?

GRIN
GRIN

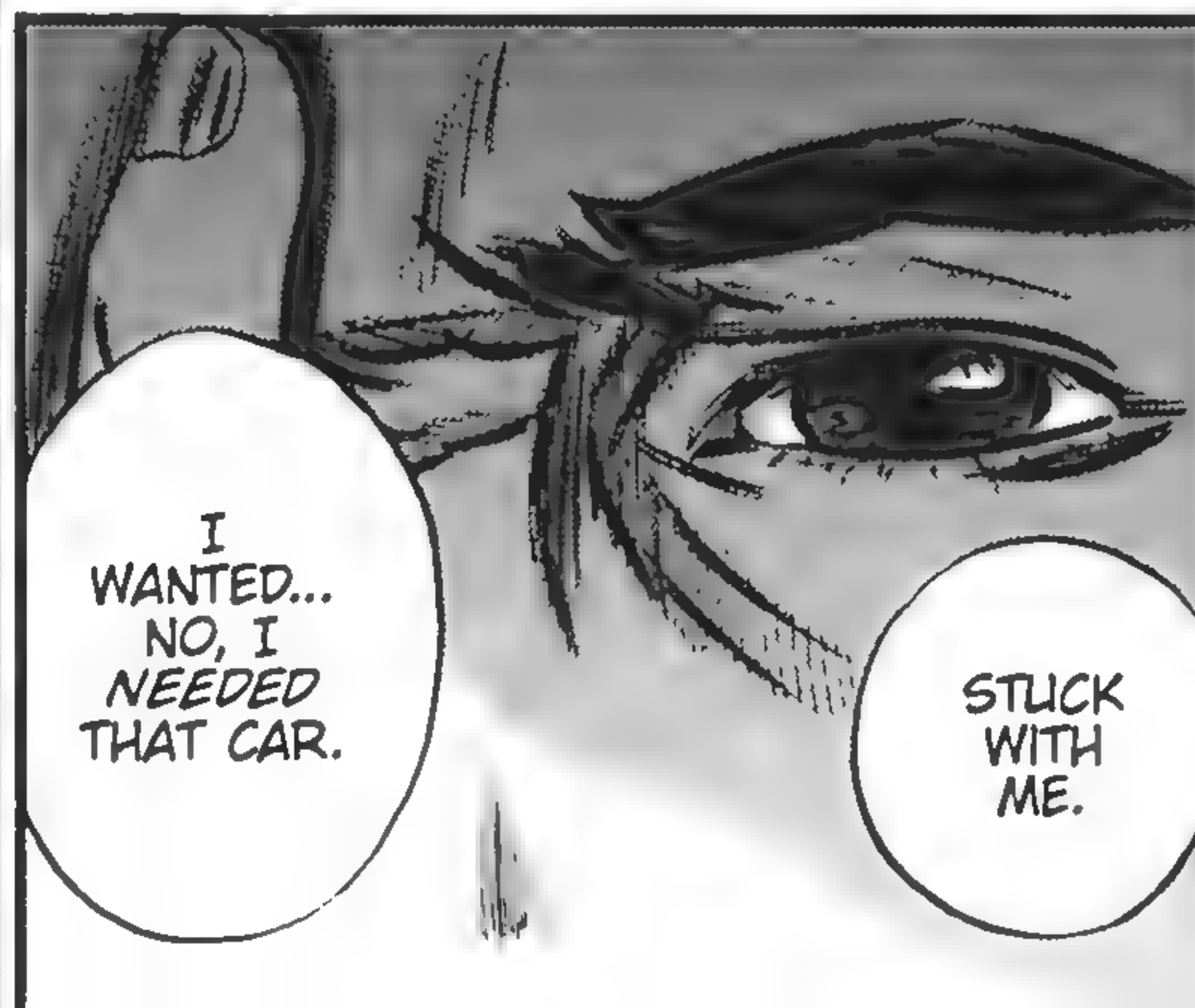


SO, I SCRIMPED
AND SAVED,
AND FINALLY...
I BOUGHT
MYSELF THIS
CHEAP LITTLE
MAZDA CAROL.



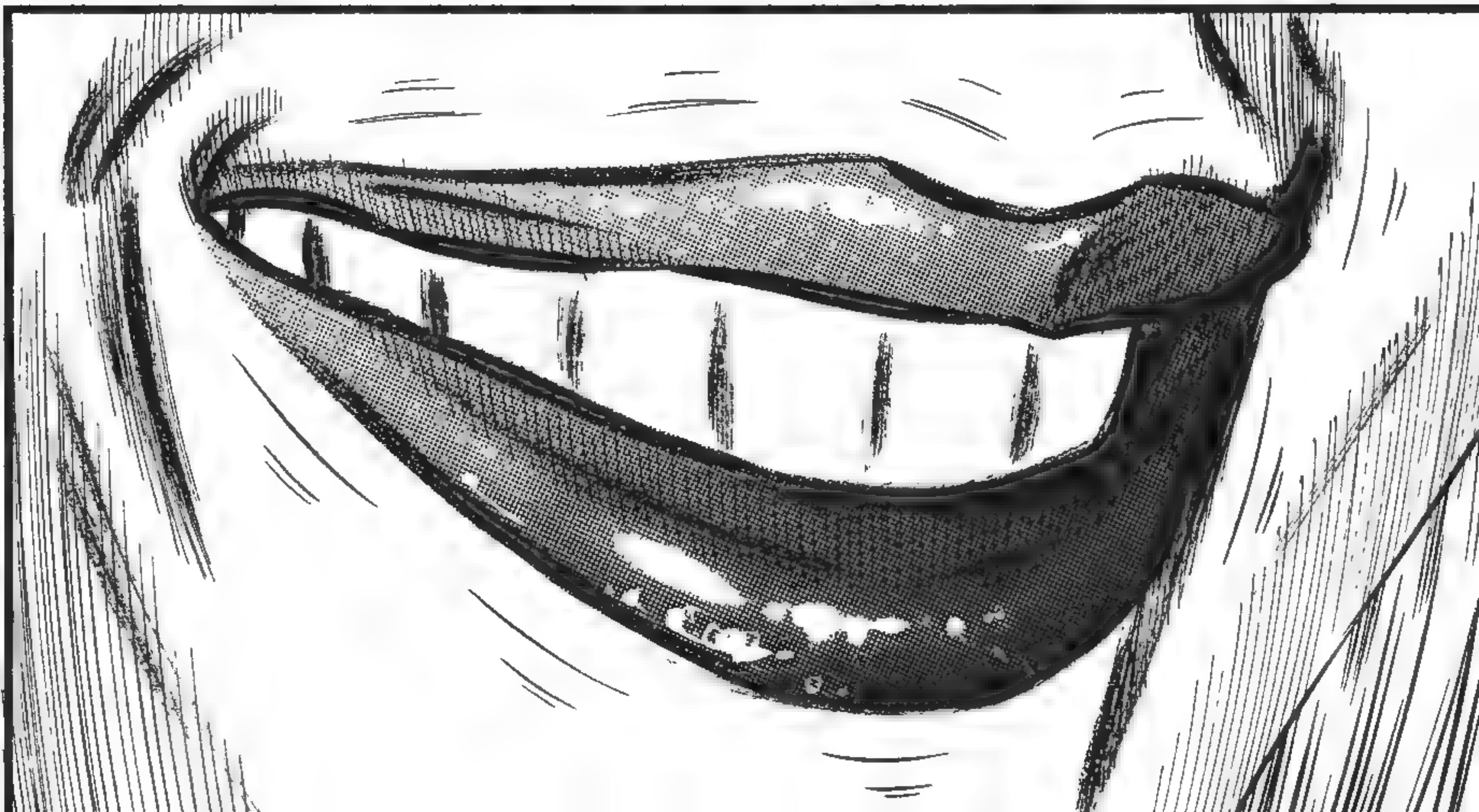
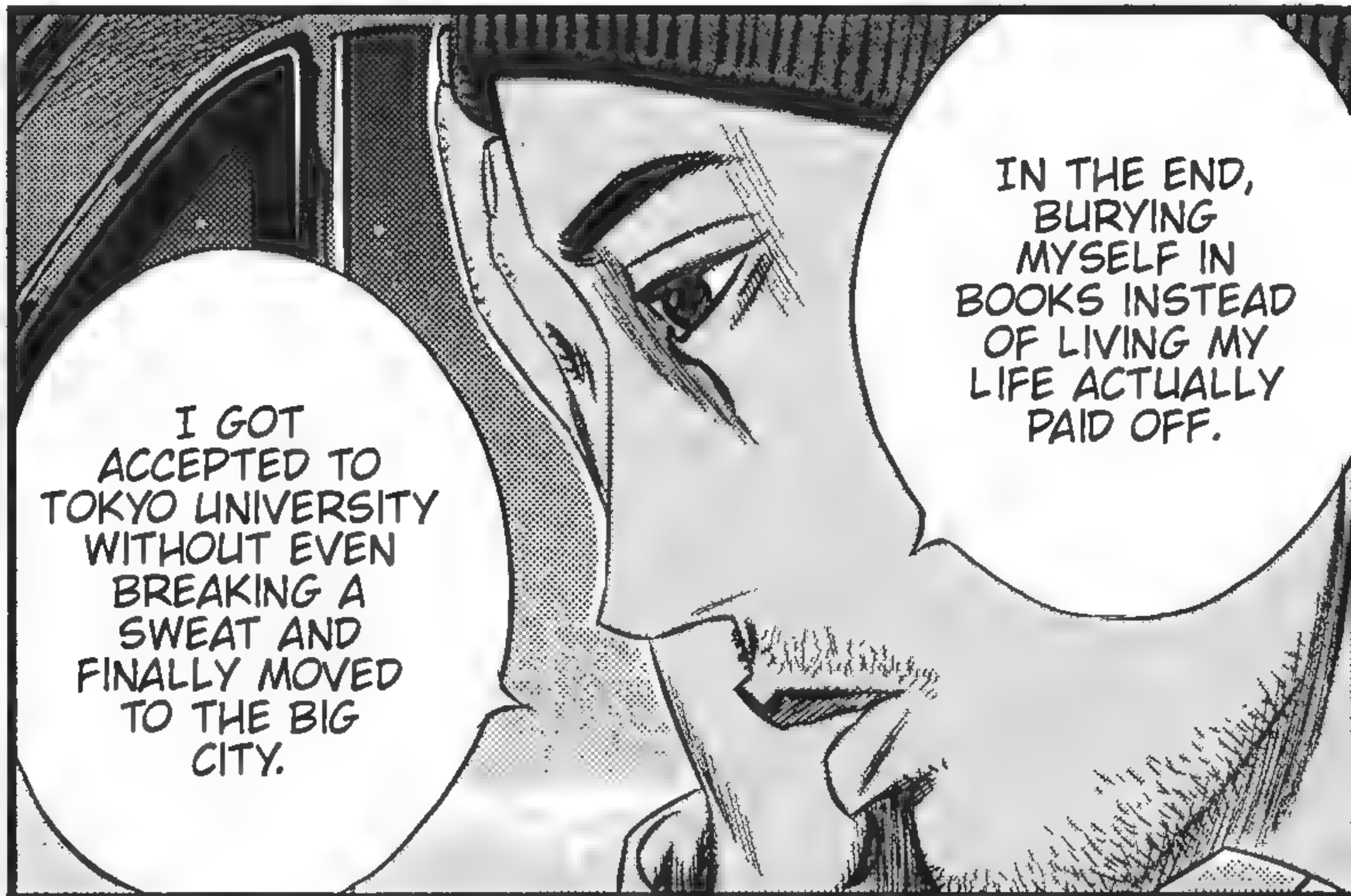
THE IDEA
THAT THE
RIGHT
CAR...

WOULD
ATTRACT
PRETTY
GIRLS TO
THE UGLIEST
OF MEN...



I
WANTED...
NO, I
NEEDED
THAT CAR.

STUCK
WITH
ME.





IT WAS
HOW I
TALKED.

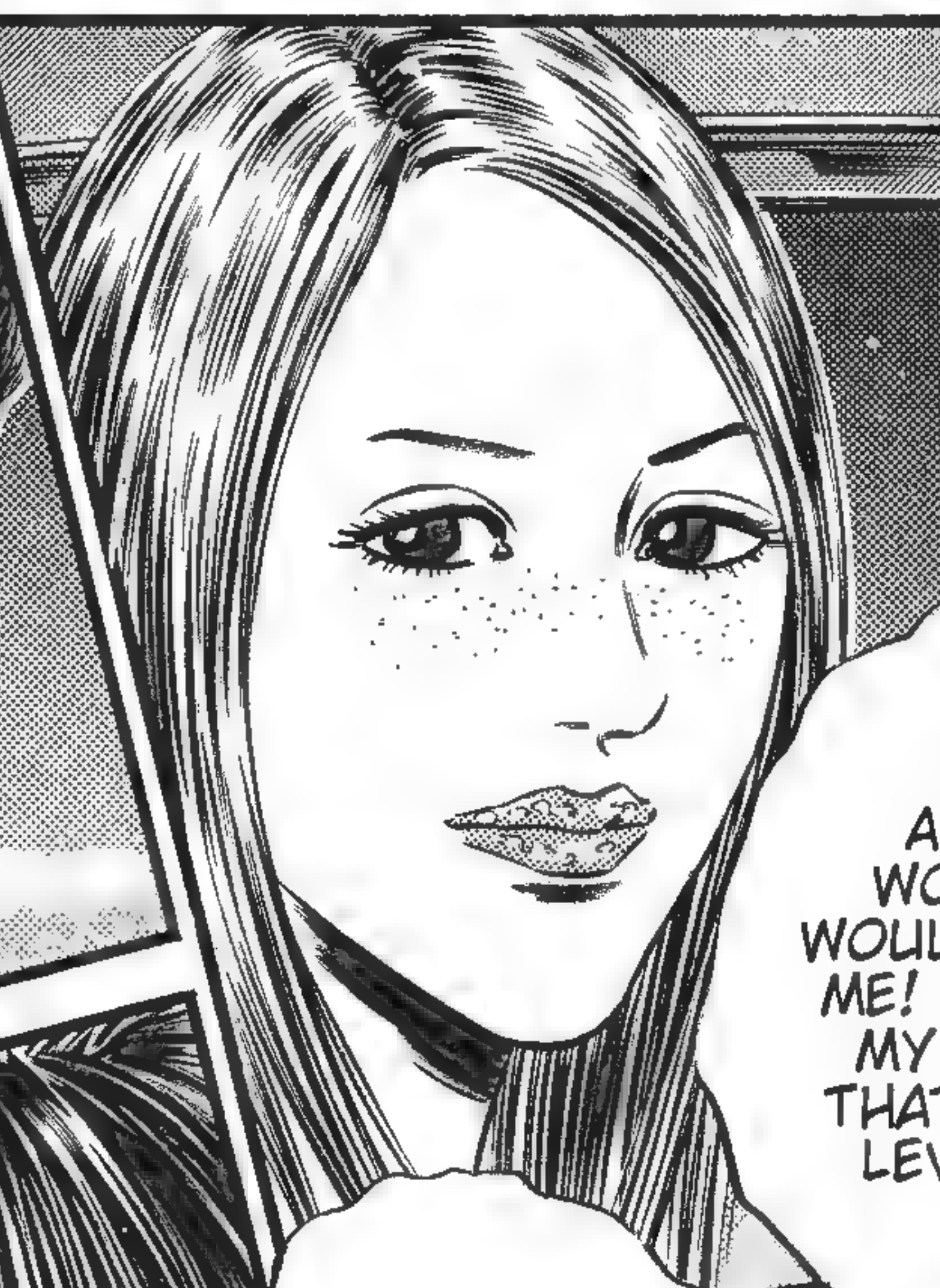


I FOUND THAT IT
WASN'T MY FACE
THAT PEOPLE
LAUGHED AT.

BUT IN
TOKYO...



BUT NO. JUST
LIKE ALWAYS,
THE ONES WOMEN
FAWN OVER ARE
THE BRAINLESS,
EMPTY SHELLS
WHO'VE COASTED
ON LOOKS THEIR
WHOLE DAMN
LIVES...



ALL THEM
WOMENFOLK
WOULD LAUGH AT
ME! MY ACCENT,
MY FACE, ALL
THAT SURFACE-
LEVEL SHIT...



AIN'T THERE
ANY GAL
OUT THERE
WHO GIVES A
DAMN 'BOUT
CHARACTER?!





IZZAT
REALLY ALL
THAT MATTERS?
AIN'T OUR
LIVES MORE'N
APPEARANCES?!



AIN'T THERE
A SINGLE GAL
OUT THERE
WHO'LL SEE
ME FOR MY
HEART?



AN'
SO...

A...



ALL I COULD
DO WAS WALK
WITH MY HEAD
DOWN.

EVEN
IN THE BIG
CITY...



I SPIED THIS
LI'L SCRAPA
PAPER AT MY
FEET.

UNTIL
ONE
DAY...



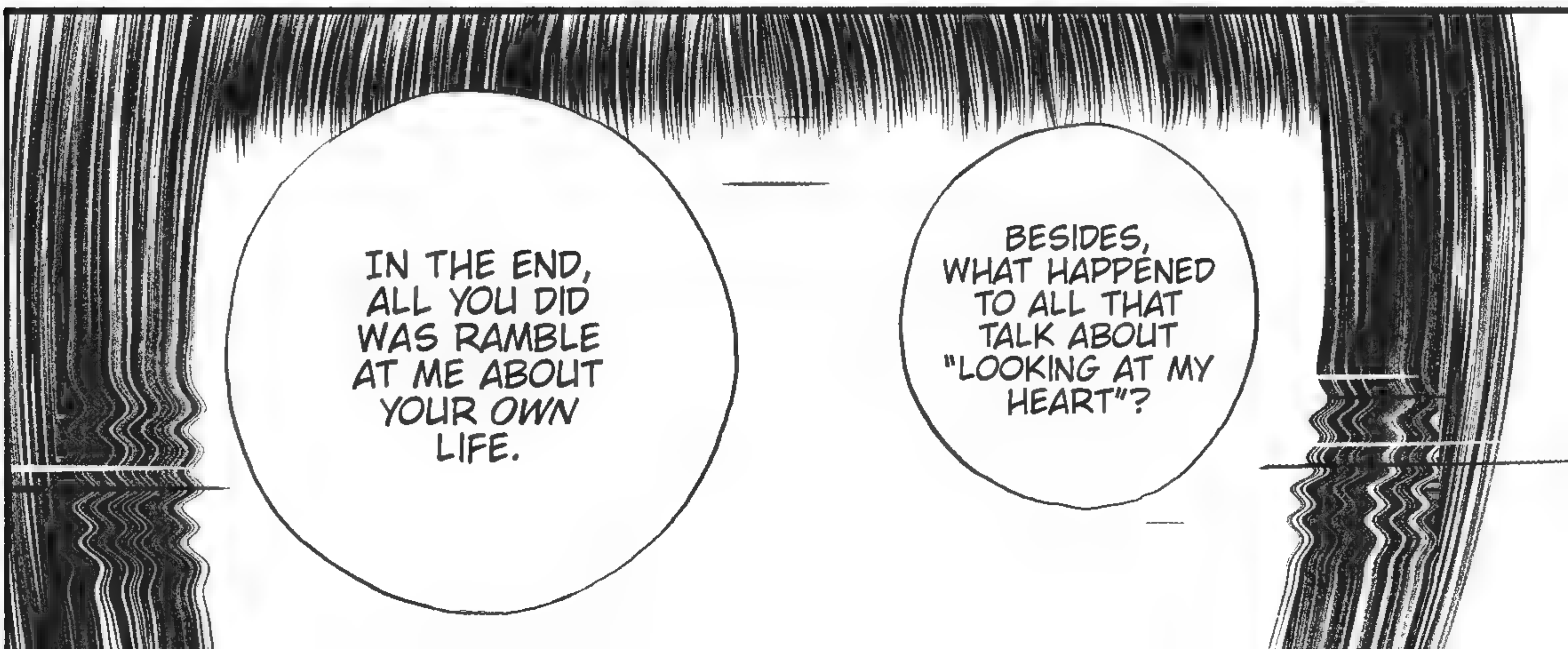


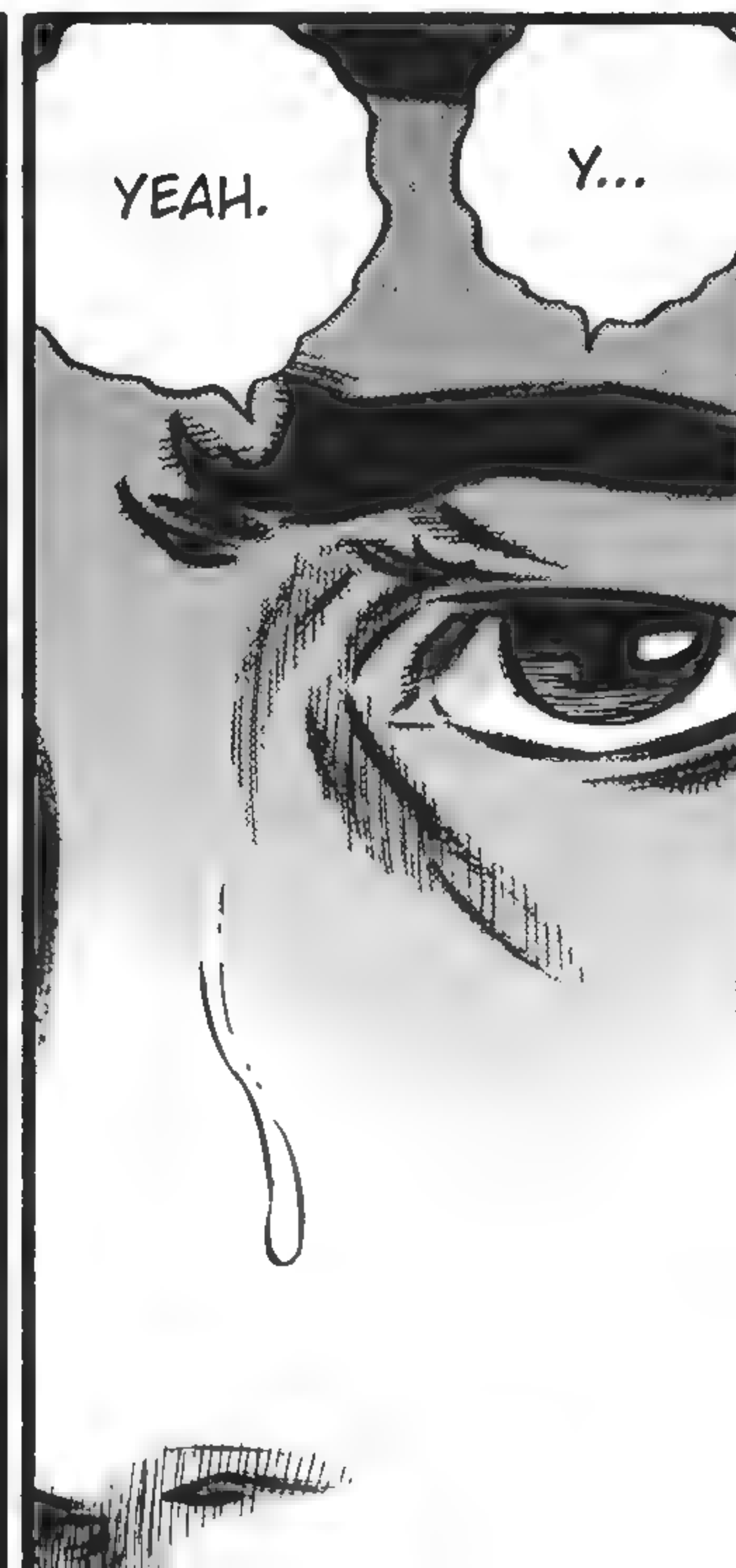
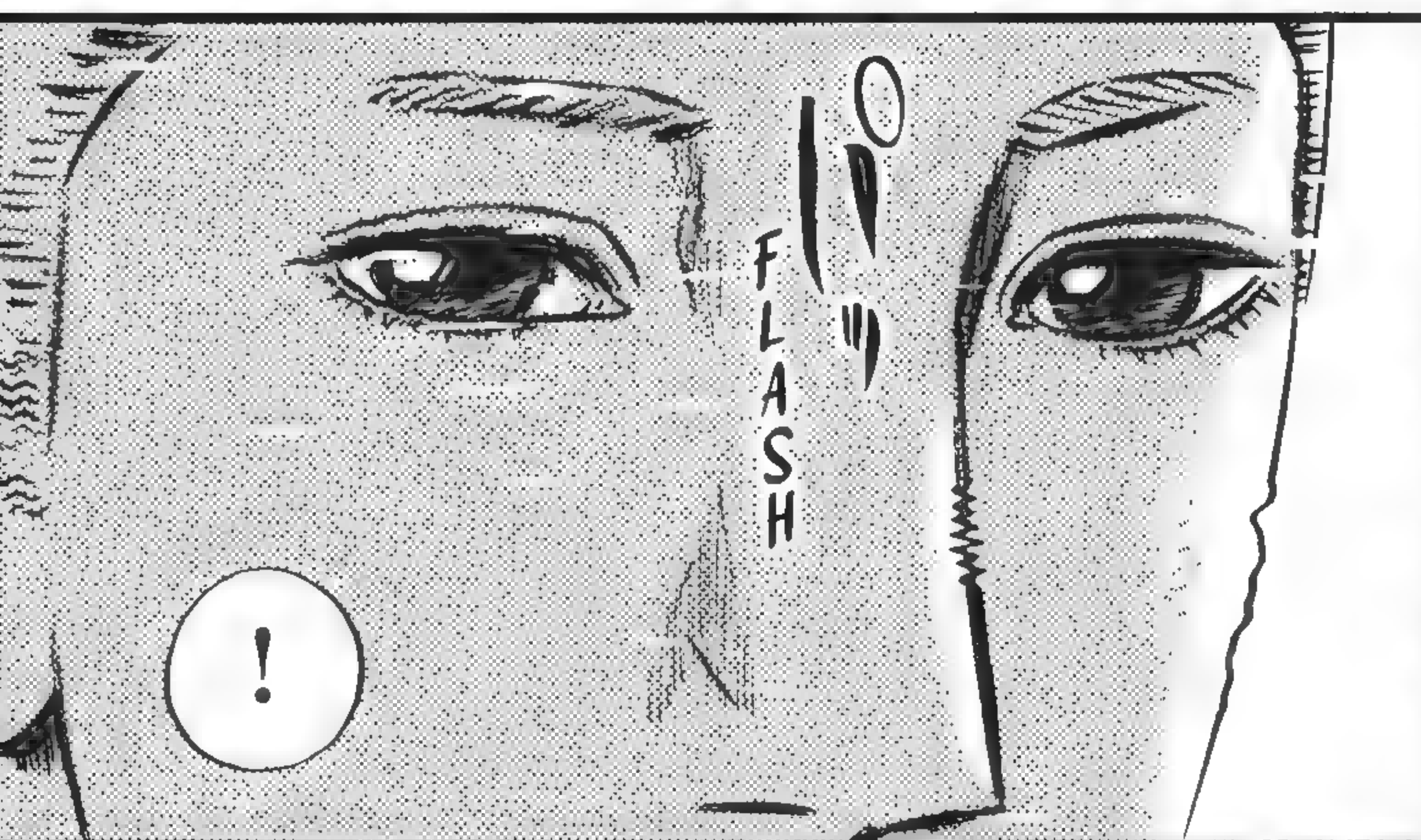
AND RIGHT
AROUND
THEN...



THAT'S
WHEN I
MET...YOU.

KSH







THEY'RE ALL
PEOPLE I'VE
KNOWN.

ALL THESE FACES
FLASHING BEFORE
MY EYES AND
MORPHING INTO
EACH OTHER...



YOU'RE
RIGHT.

MAYBE THIS
IS ALL A
FIGMENT OF MY
IMAGINATION.



HEE
HEE.

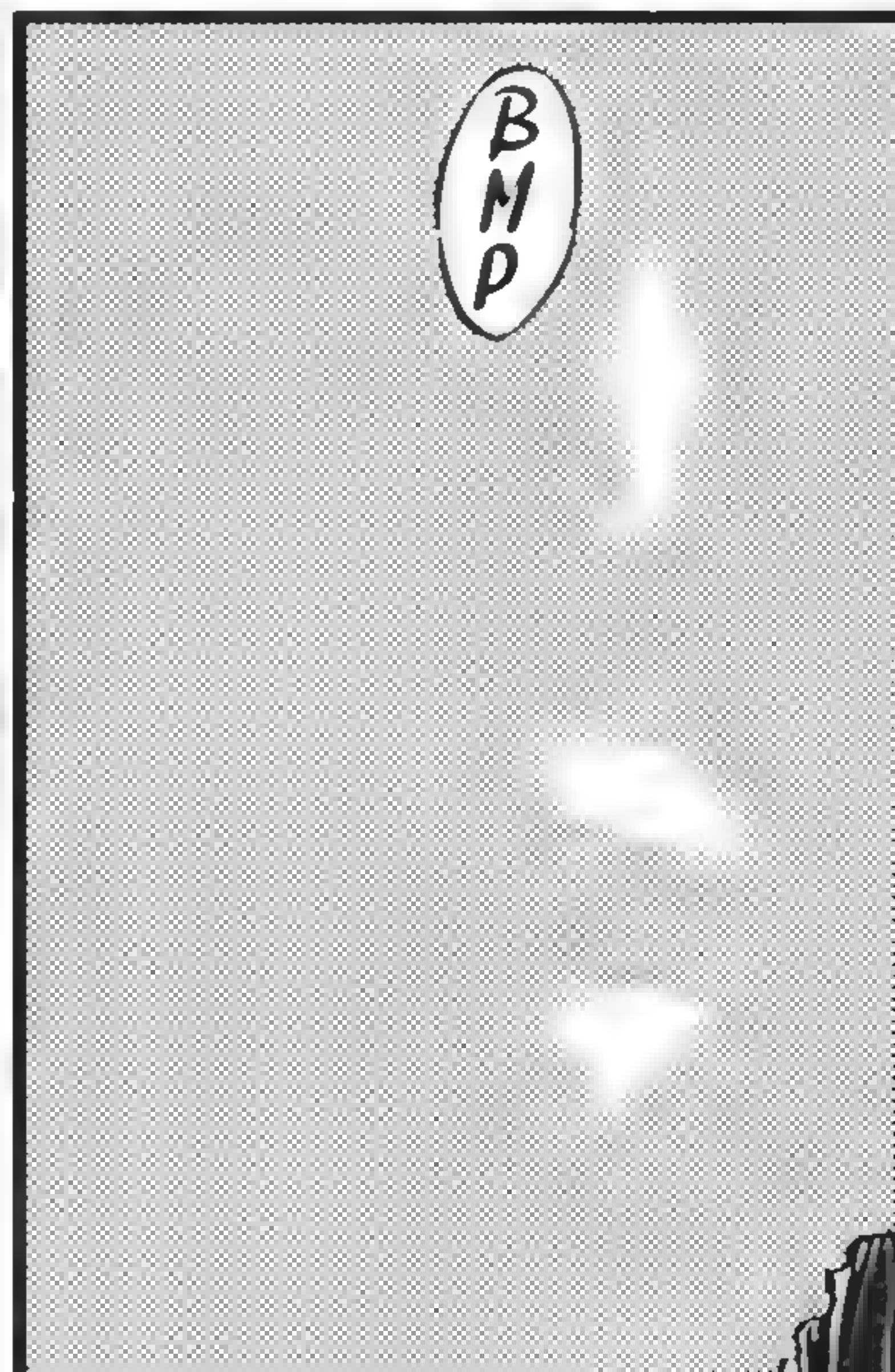
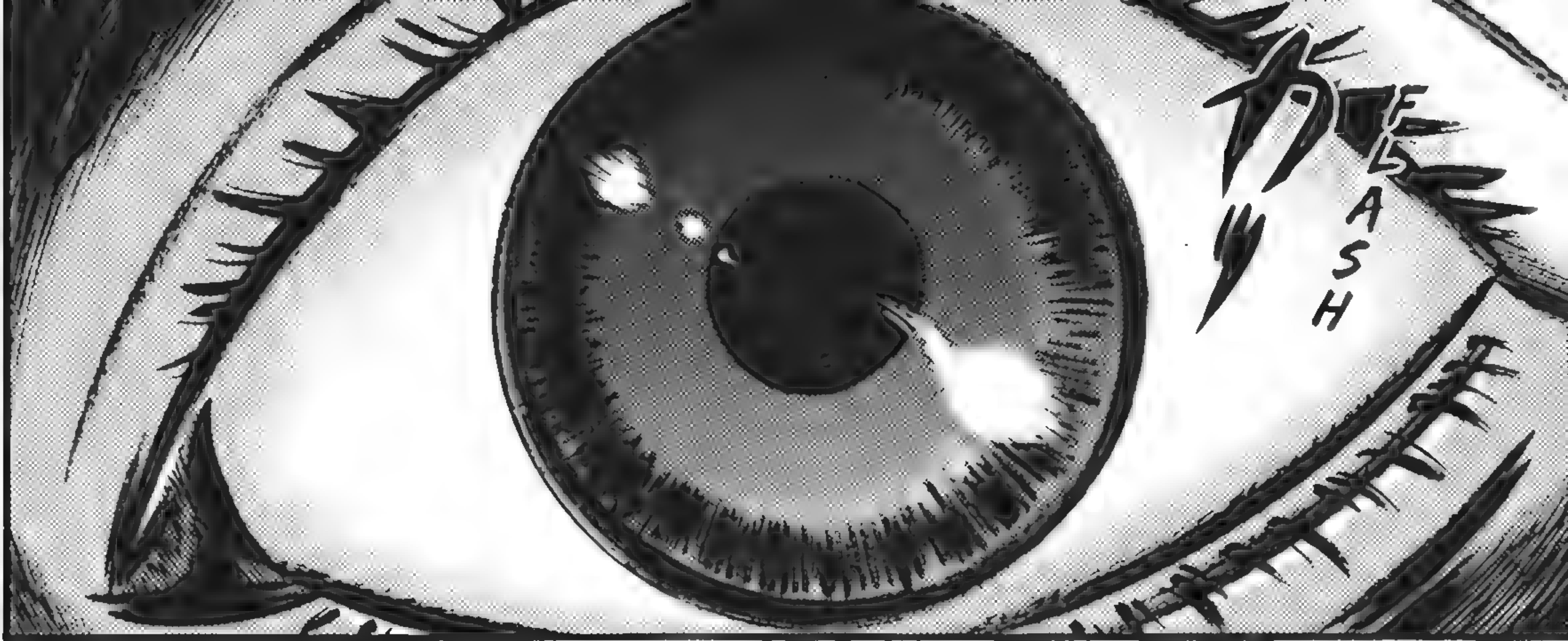


BUT
LOOK AND
TALK...?!

BUT EVEN
SO, WHAT
ELSE CAN
I DO...



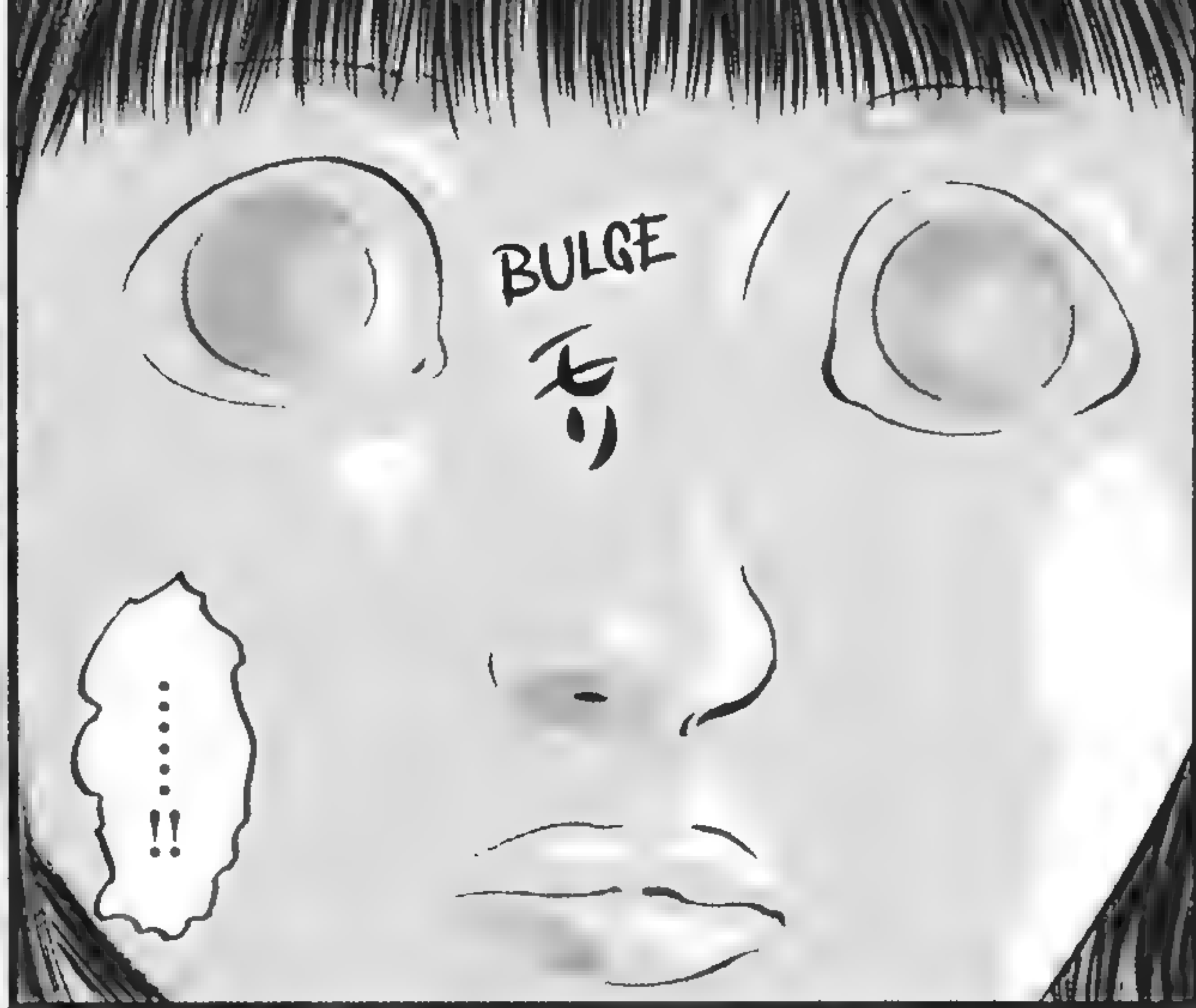
TALKING TO THEM...
THE THINGS I SEE
RIGHT IN FRONT
OF ME! THAT'S THE
ONLY WAY TO SEE
INTO A PERSON'S
HEART!





NO! NOT
THAT
ONE...

N...



BULGE

.....
!!

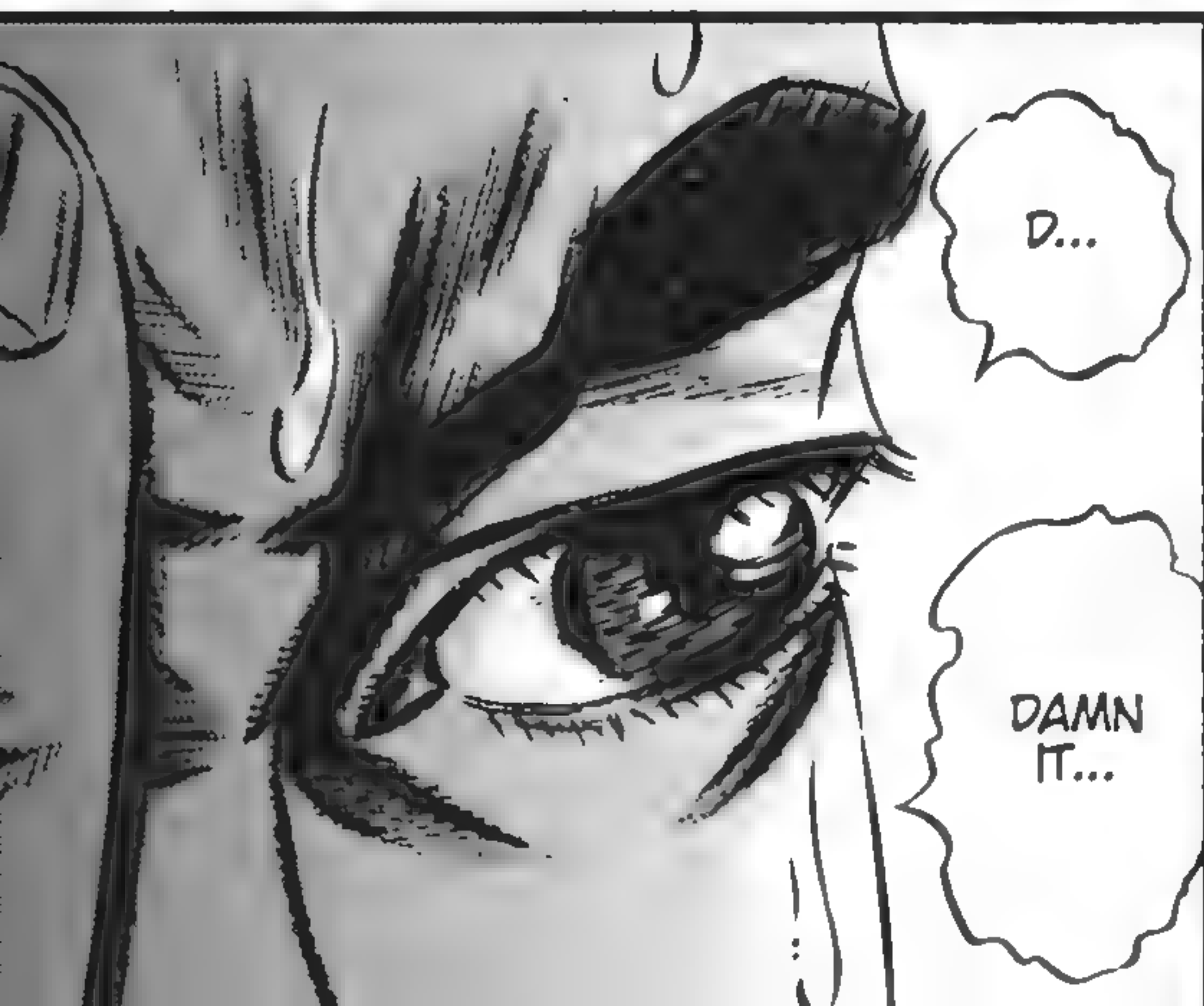


N...

NO! THAT'S
NOT THE
REAL YOU!

SO...

WHAT WAS
IT LIKE TO
GET A NEW
FACE? DID
IT CHANGE
ANYTHING?



D...

DAMN
IT...



TOO BAD!
YOU GOTTA
TALK TO
"WHATEVER'S
RIGHT IN
FRONT
OF YOU,"
RIGHT?

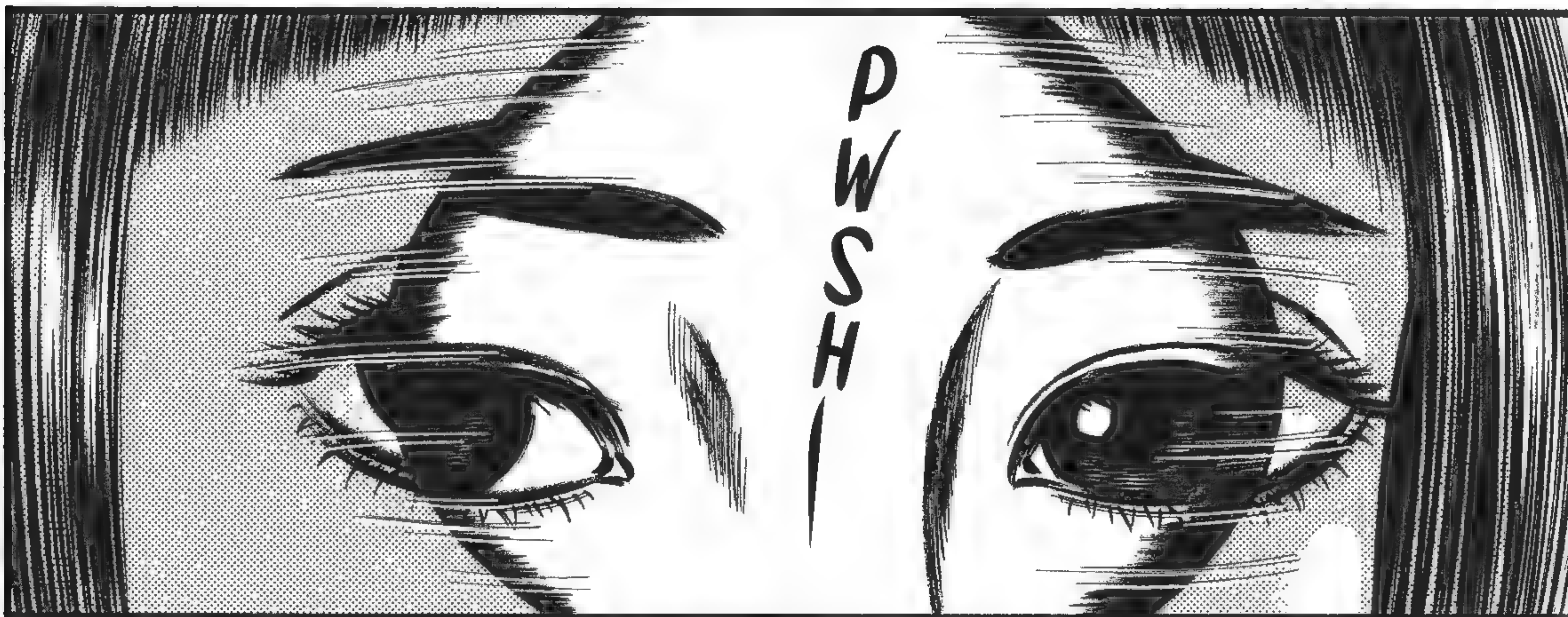


AFTER
GOING
UNDER THE
KNIFE.

THAT FACE
THERE--THAT
"YOU"--WAS
THE FIRST
GIRL I EVER
SLEPT WITH...

YOU
GOT IT.

F...FINE.



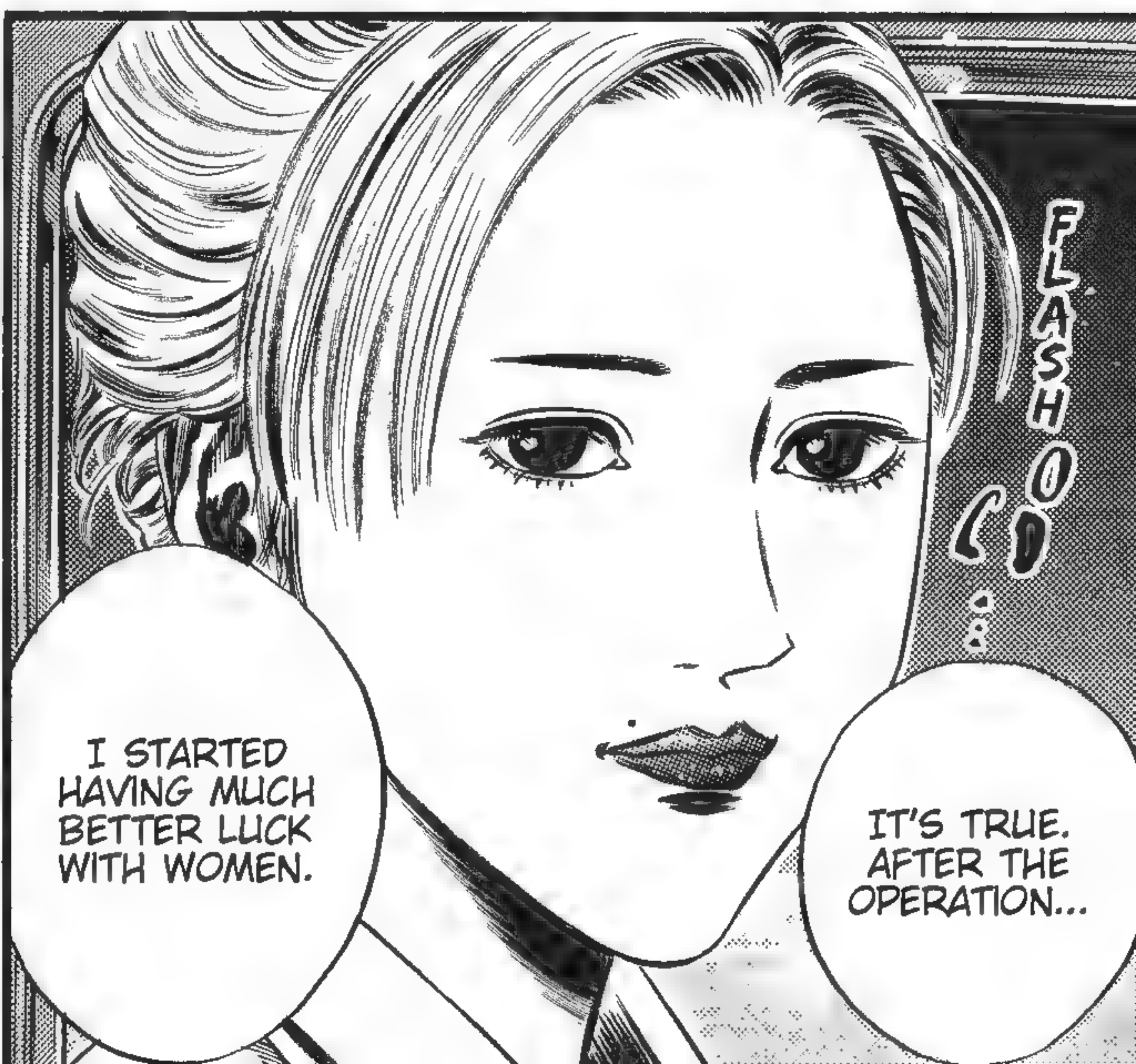
P
W
S
H



THE MONEY I
WAS MAKING
MUST'VE
HELPED TOO,
SO...

AROUND THE
SAME TIME,
I GOT A JOB
AT A FOREIGN
BANK.

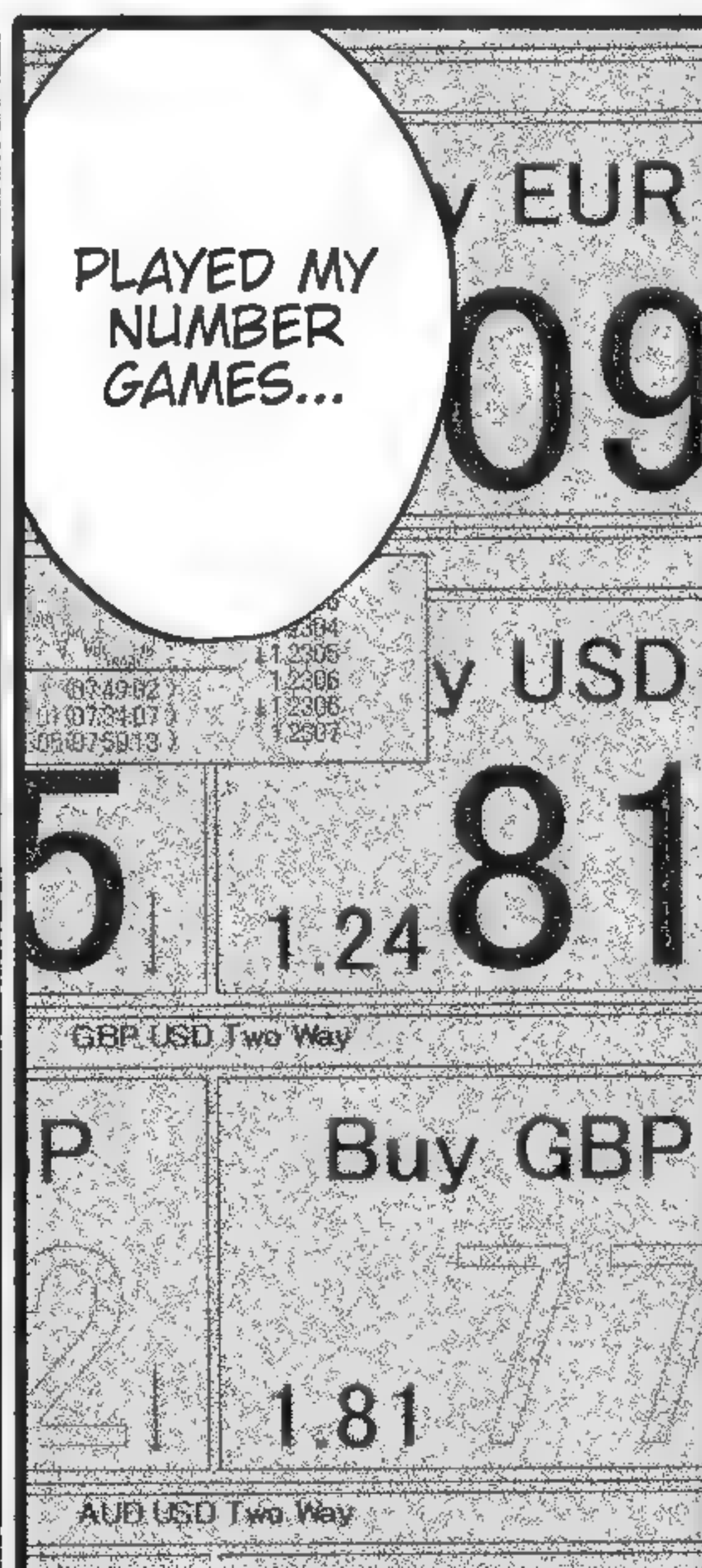
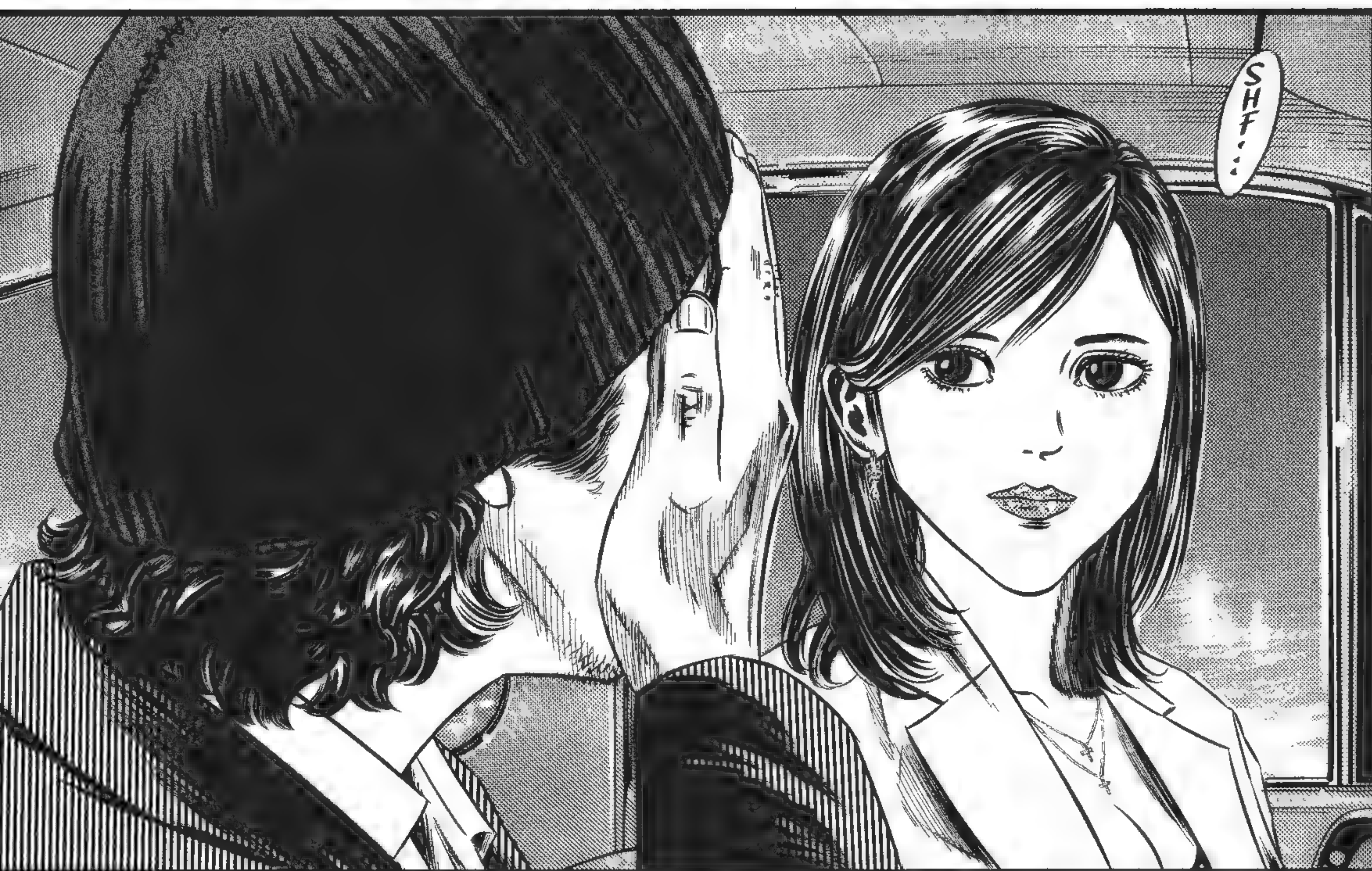
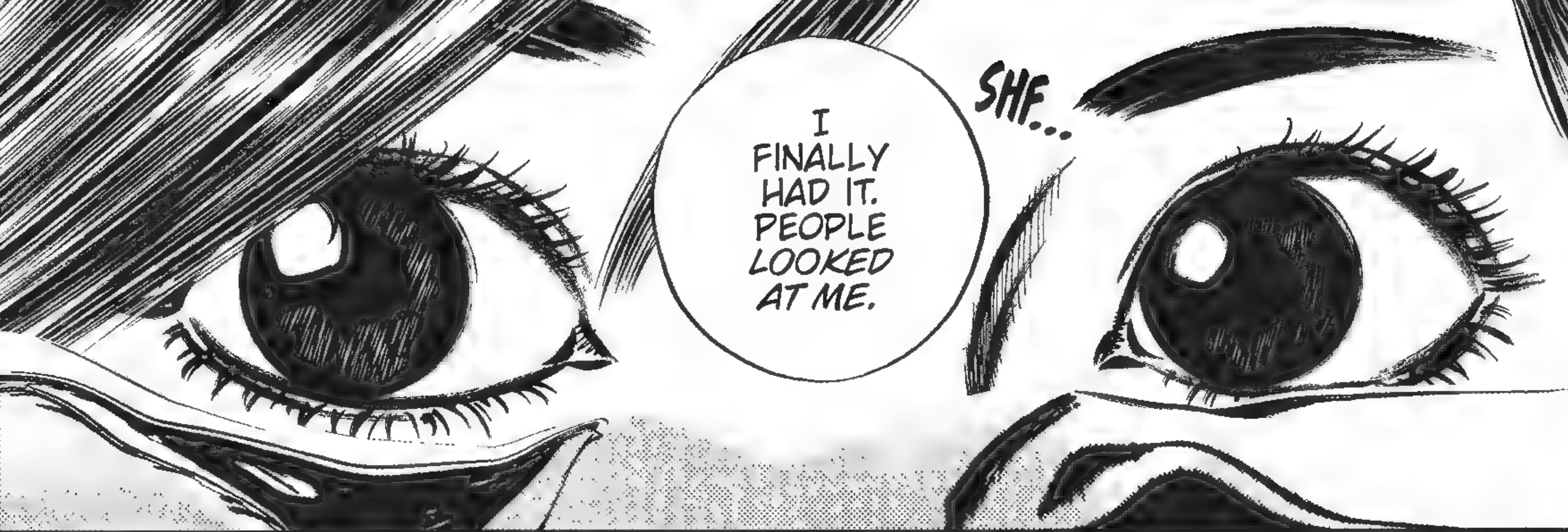
D
L
J
R
A
P
O
O



I STARTED
HAVING MUCH
BETTER LUCK
WITH WOMEN.

IT'S TRUE.
AFTER THE
OPERATION...

F
L
A
S
H
O
O

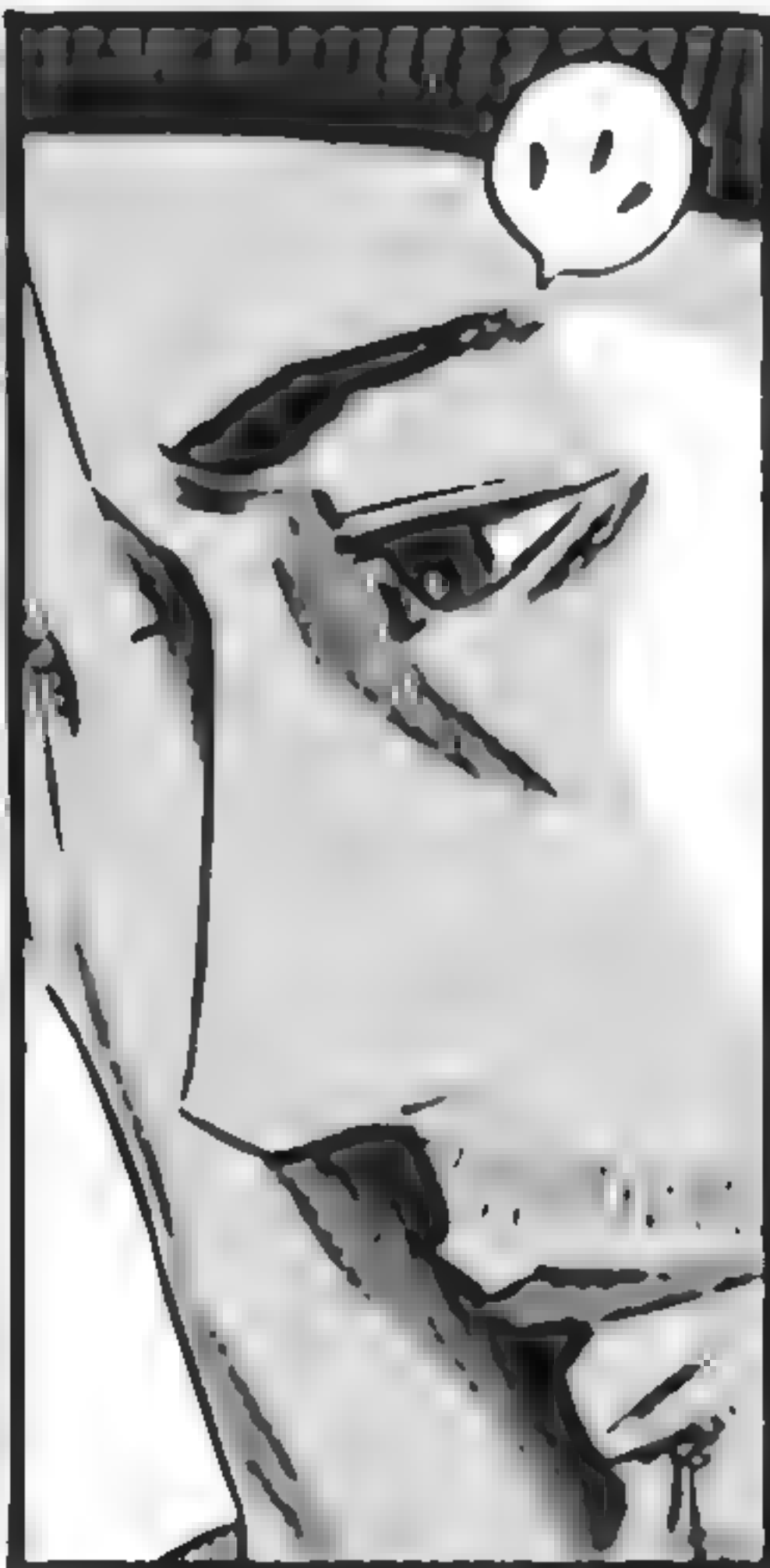




NOTHING
EVER FELT
REAL.



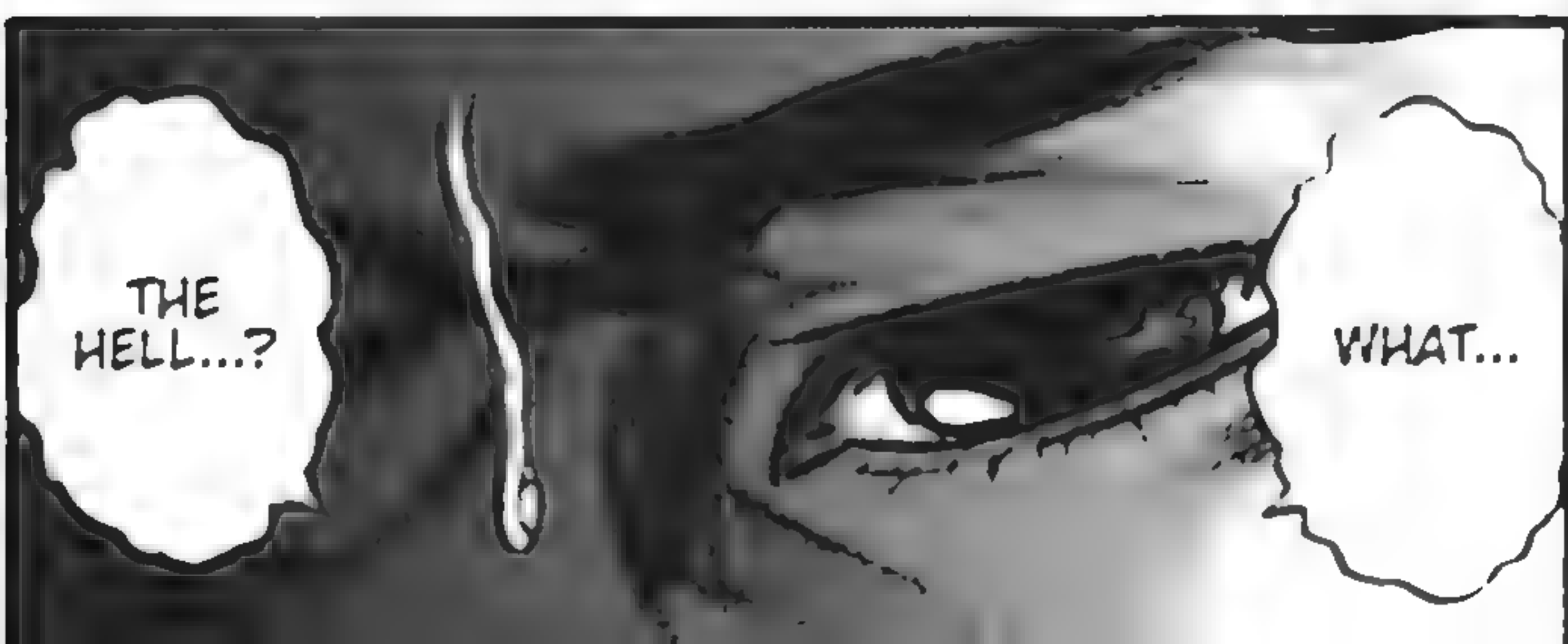
.....
!!



!!



.....



THE
HELL...?

WHAT...



TH...

THIS IS
WHAT MY
PORSCHÉ'S
DASH LOOKED
LIKE...



IT'S NOT
JUST
PEOPLE.

EVEN MY
SURROUND-
INGS ARE
STARTING TO
CHANGE!

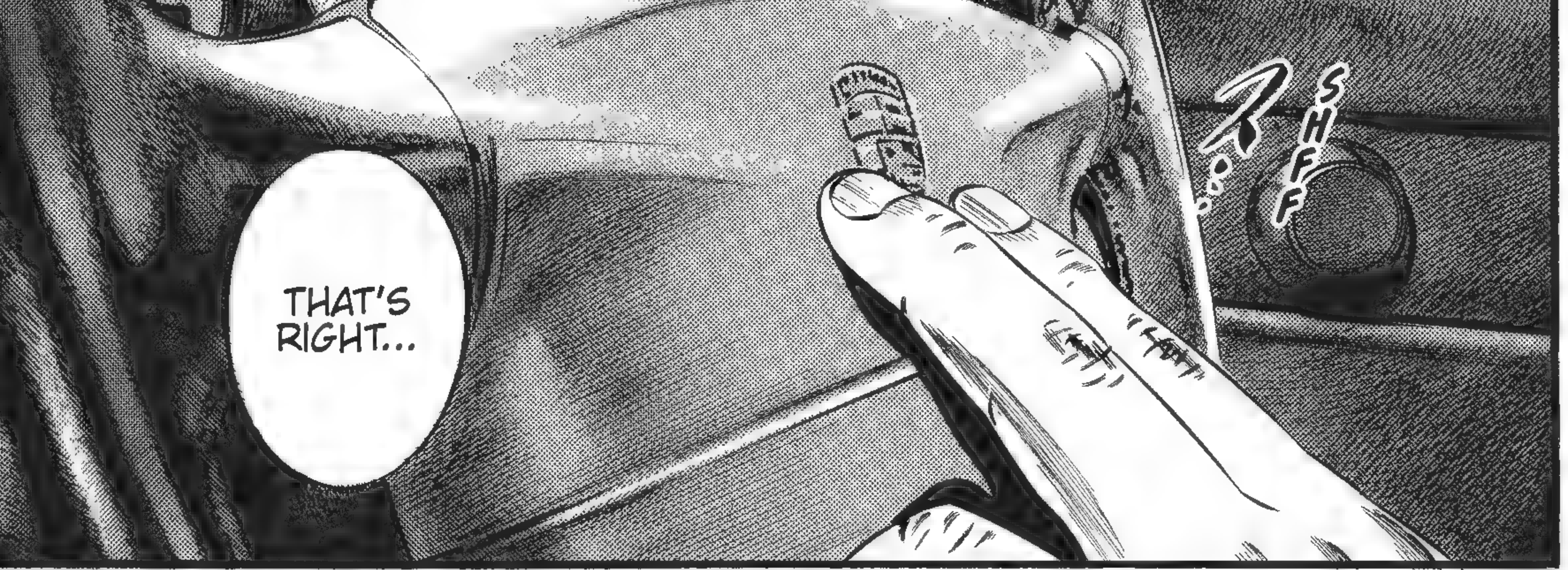


.....
?



THAT
CLINCHES
IT. WHAT
I'M SEEING
REALLY IS...

ALL
IN MY
HEAD.



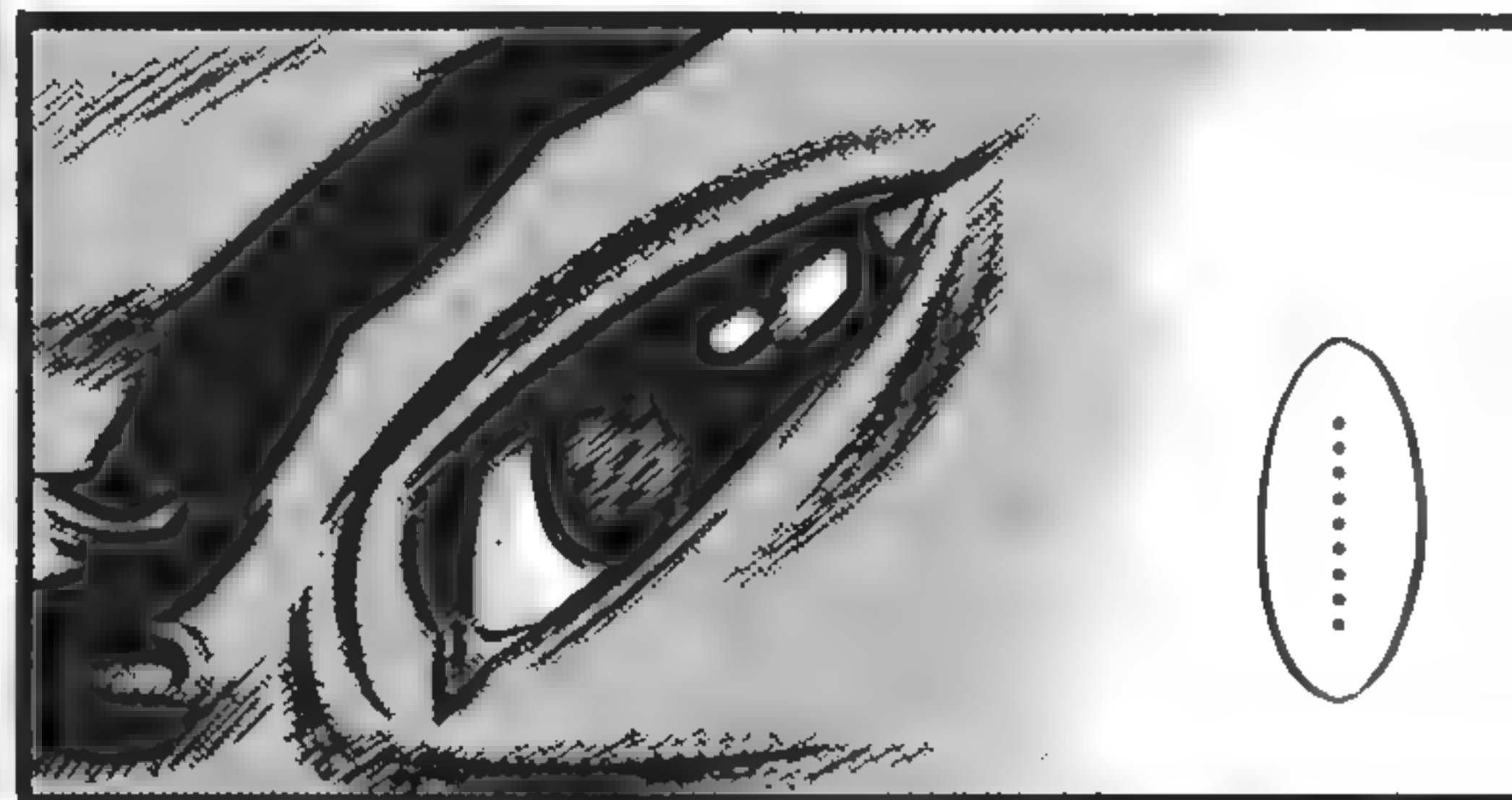
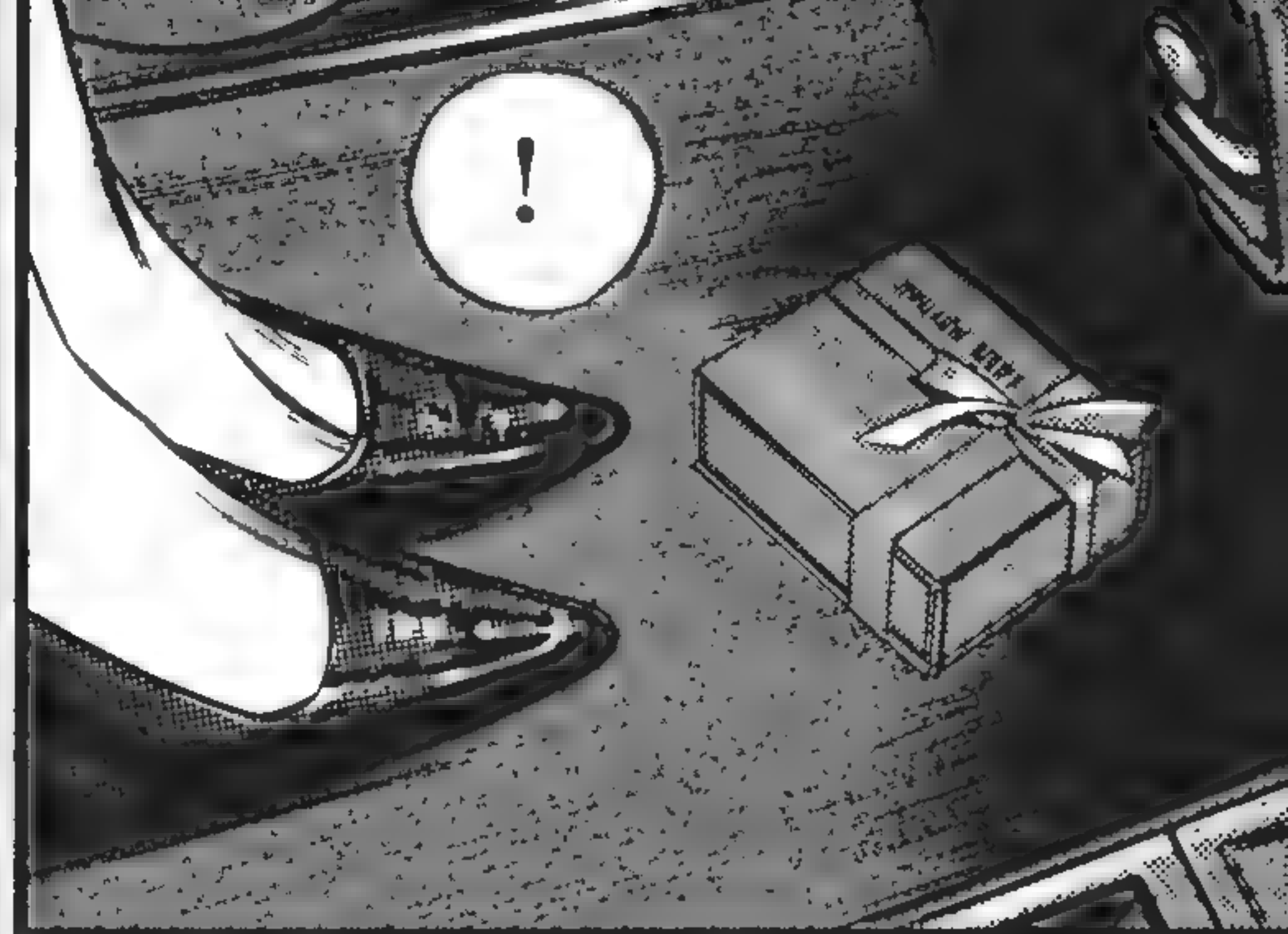
THAT'S
RIGHT...



IT WAS NEVER
ME THOSE
WOMEN WERE
LOOKING AT.

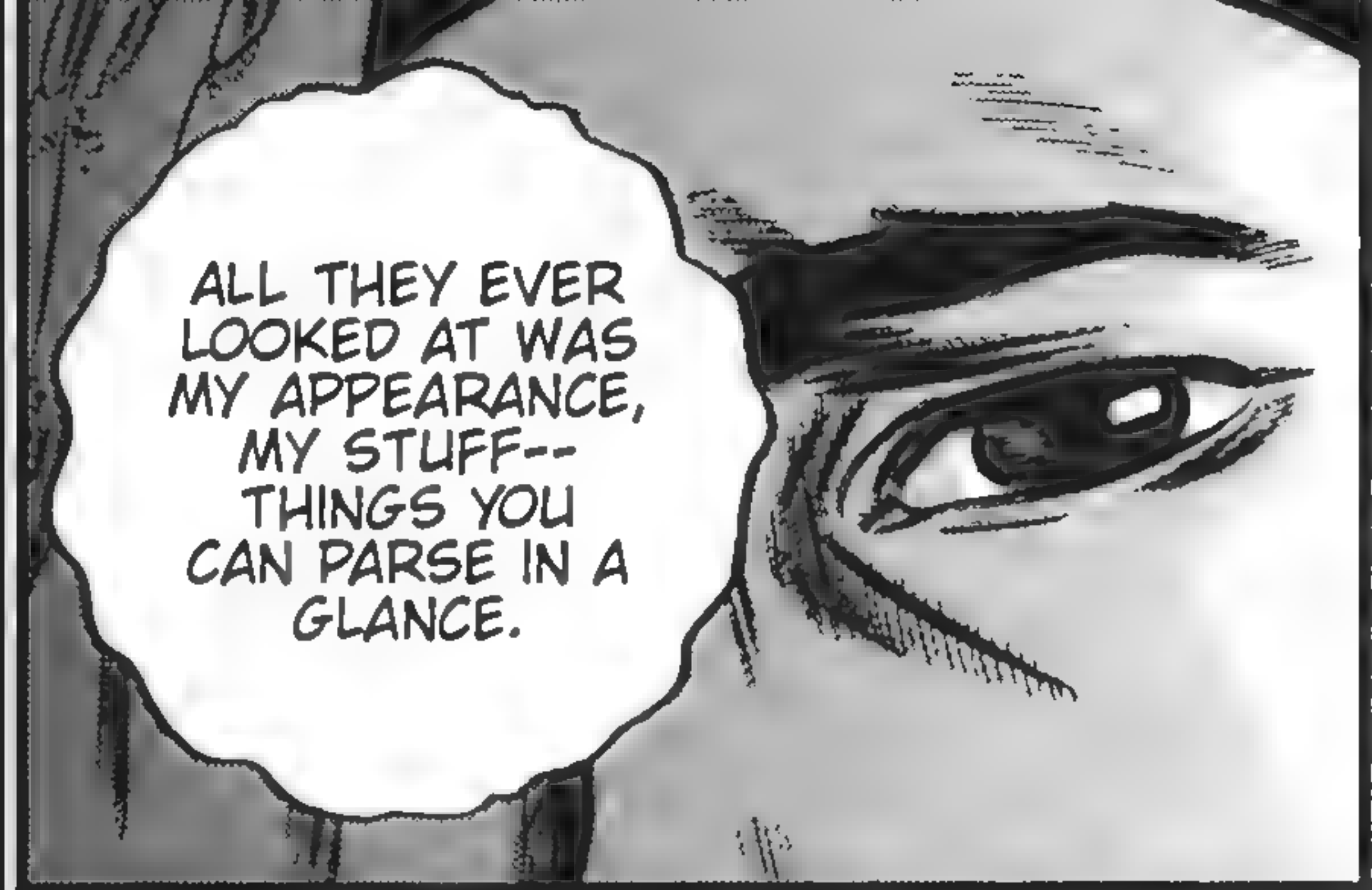


IT WAS
THIS
CAR...

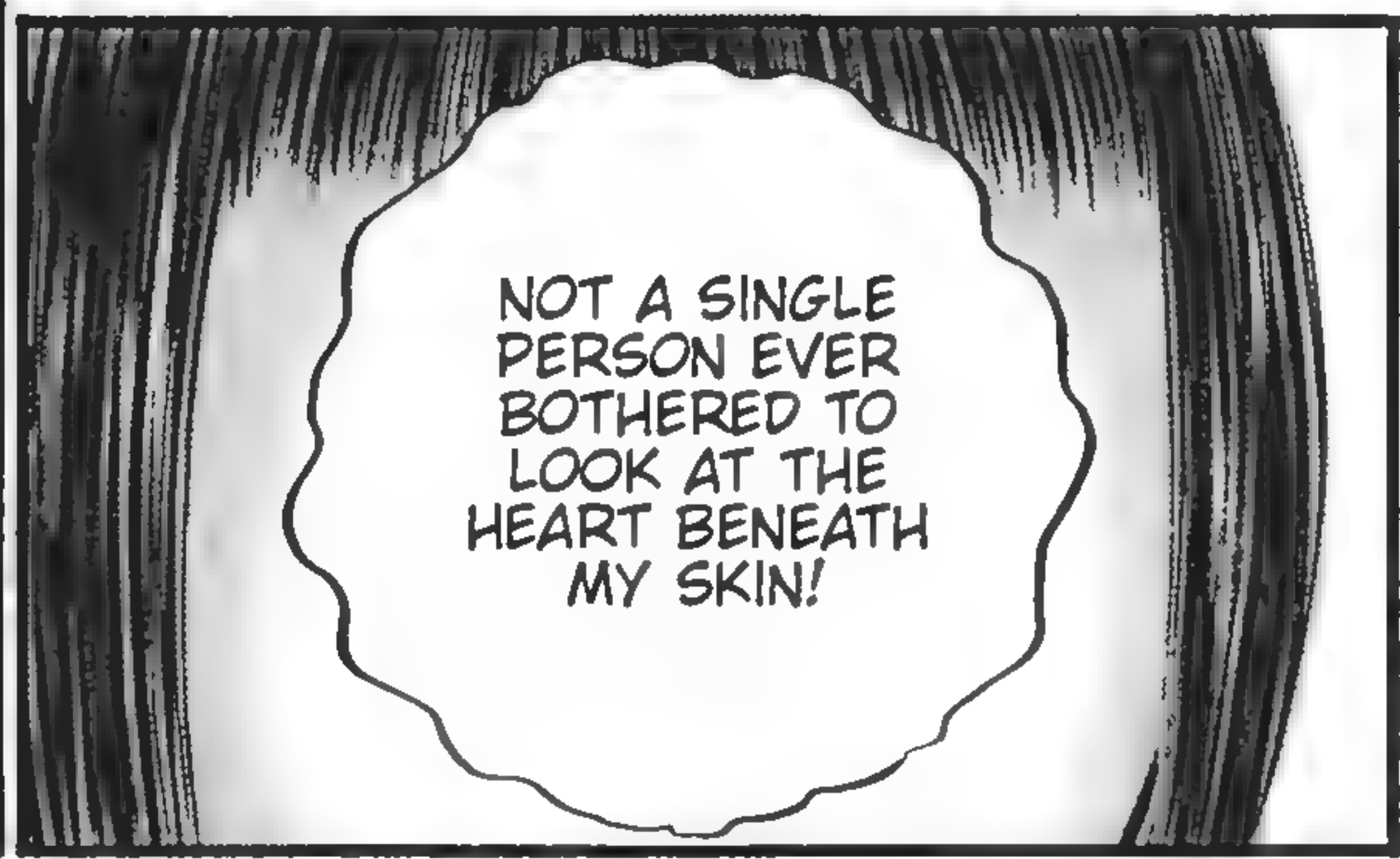




AND SO,
EVEN AFTER
ALL THAT, I
WAS STILL
INVISIBLE.



ALL THEY EVER
LOOKED AT WAS
MY APPEARANCE,
MY STUFF--
THINGS YOU
CAN PARSE IN A
GLANCE.



NOT A SINGLE
PERSON EVER
BOTHERED TO
LOOK AT THE
HEART BENEATH
MY SKIN!





WAS
KILLING
ME.

THE
STRESS...



I'D COME TO THE
SEA OR YELL IN
MY CAR IN MY
OLD ACCENT,
JUST TO HEAR
MYSELF.

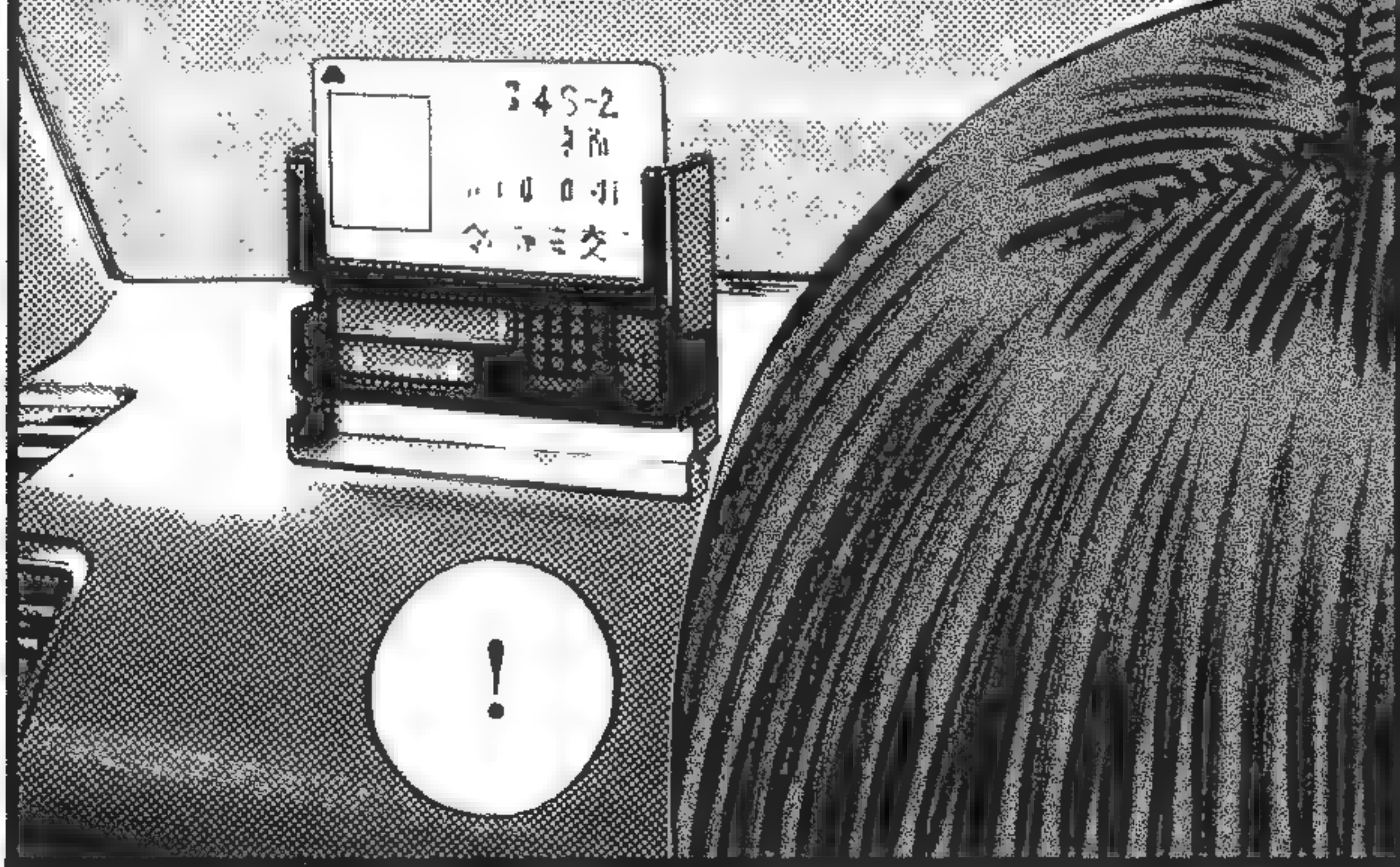


I'D EAT MY OWN
SEMEN JUST
BECAUSE IT HAD
MY SMELL, MY
HEAT--WAS A
PIECE OF ME.

THEN I'D SPRAY
THAT SAME ME
ALL OVER GIRLS'
PRETTY FACES
JUST TO MESS
THEM UP.



BUT
THEN, ONE
DAY...

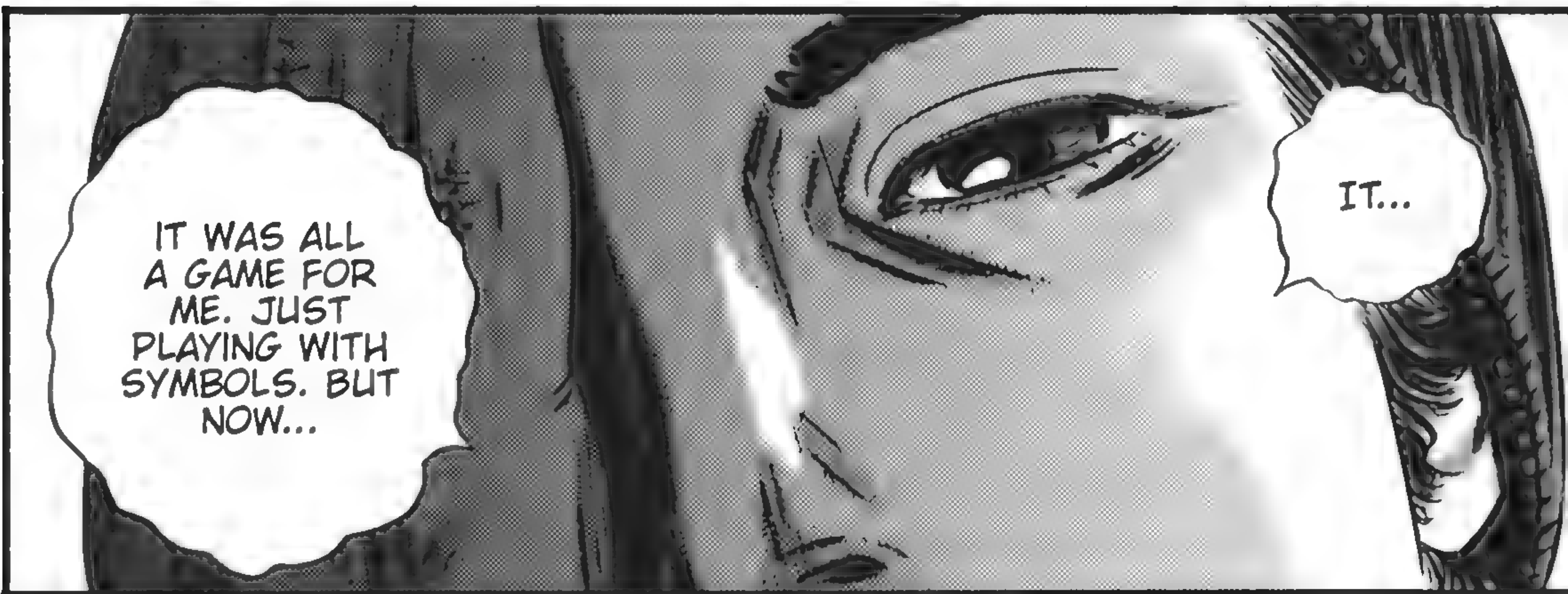


HE USED TO
WORK FOR A HUGE
CORPORATION I
CRUSHED. I RUINED
HIS LIFE; HE WAS
REDUCED TO
DRIVING A TAXI
OUT IN THE
BOONIES.



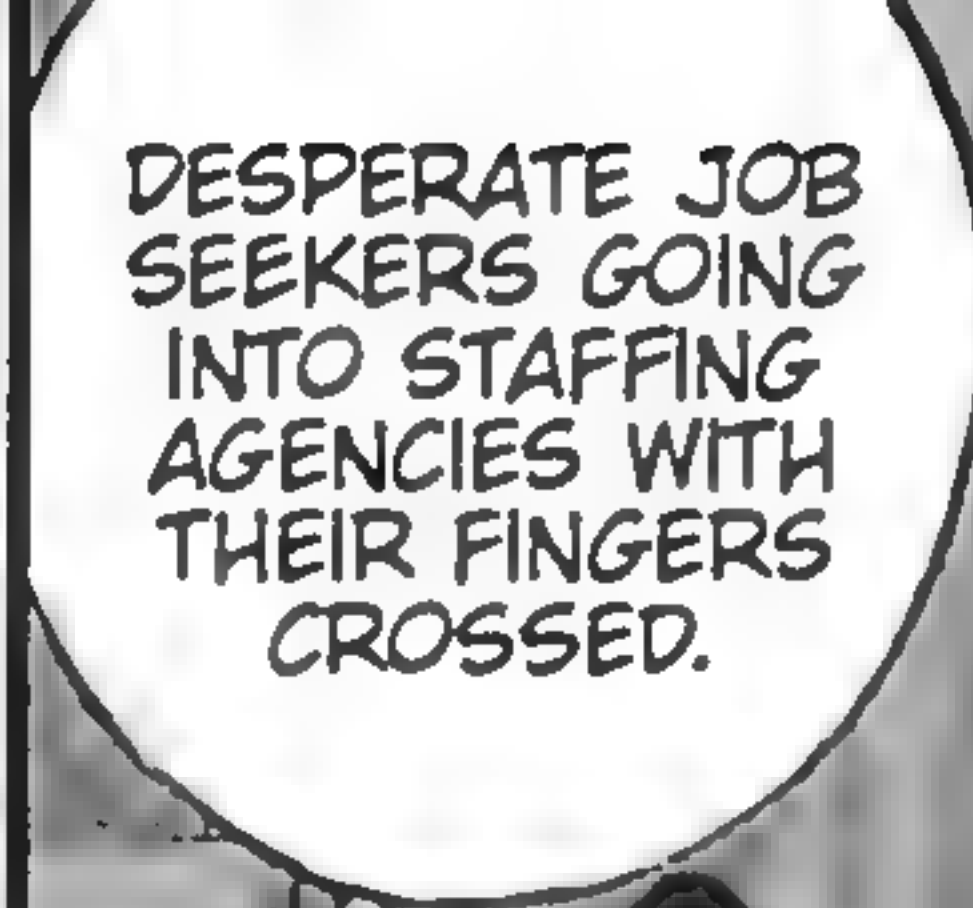
I ENCOUN-
TERED A
MAN...

WHO
SHOWED ME
THE EMOTIONAL
SIDE OF MY
"NUMBERS."





HOMELESS
PEOPLE
SLEEPING ON
BENCHES...



DESPERATE JOB
SEEKERS GOING
INTO STAFFING
AGENCIES WITH
THEIR FINGERS
CROSSED.



AFTER THAT,
I SAW THEM
EVERY-
WHERE.



I COULDN'T
TAKE MY
EYES OFF
THEM.

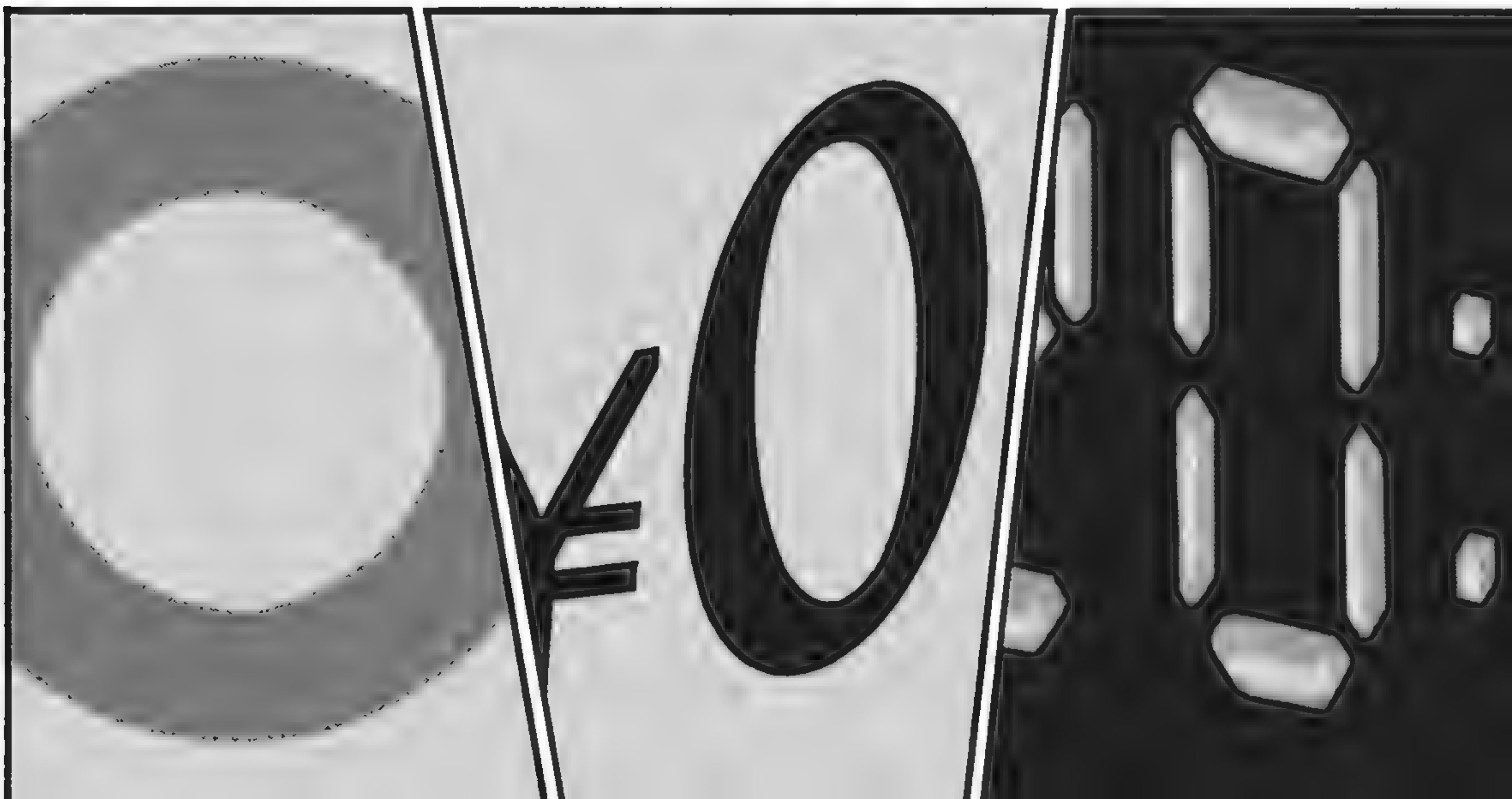
OR
STANDING IN
LINE AT SOUP
KITCHENS.



I COULDN'T
HELP BUT
WONDER...

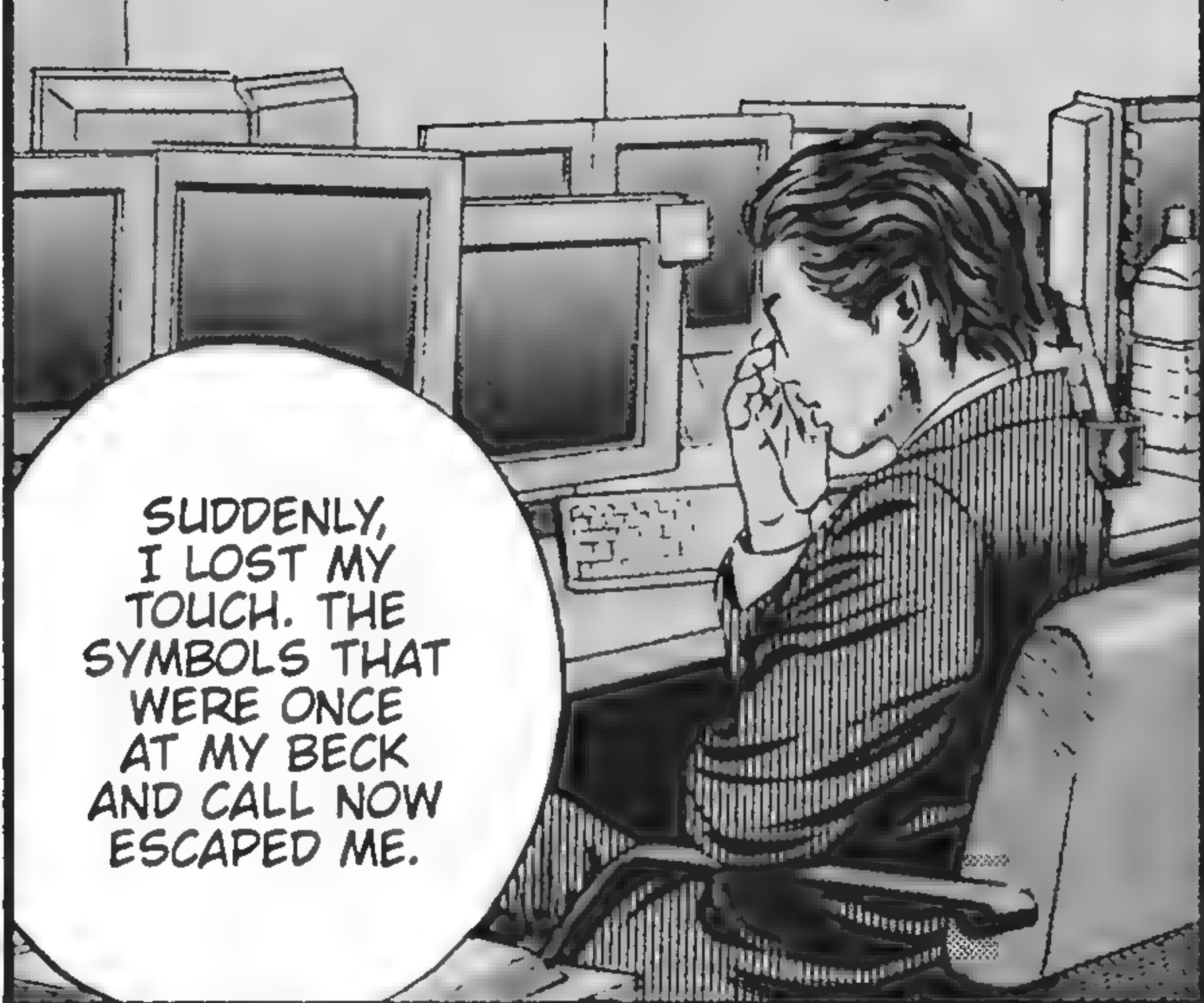
HOW MANY OF
THEM WERE
FROM COMPANIES
I'D PERSONALLY
DESTROYED.







NATURALLY,
MY PERFORM-
ANCE AT
WORK TOOK A
NOSEDIVE AS
A RESULT.



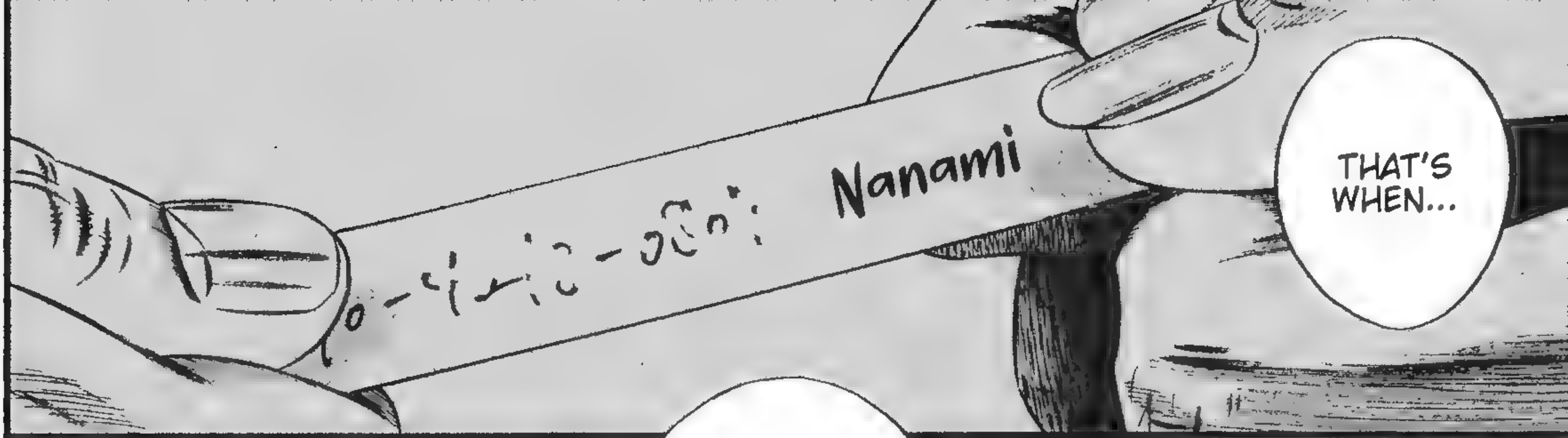
SUDDENLY,
I LOST MY
TOUCH. THE
SYMBOLS THAT
WERE ONCE
AT MY BECK
AND CALL NOW
ESCAPED ME.



EVEN
BEING WITH
WOMEN...



WAS
UNENJOYABLE.
MY MIND KEPT
WANDERING BACK
TO THE SAME
PLACES...



Nanami

THAT'S
WHEN...



I ASKED
YOU OUT.



AND
YOU...

THREW
THAT *THING*
AWAY IN MY
ROOM.



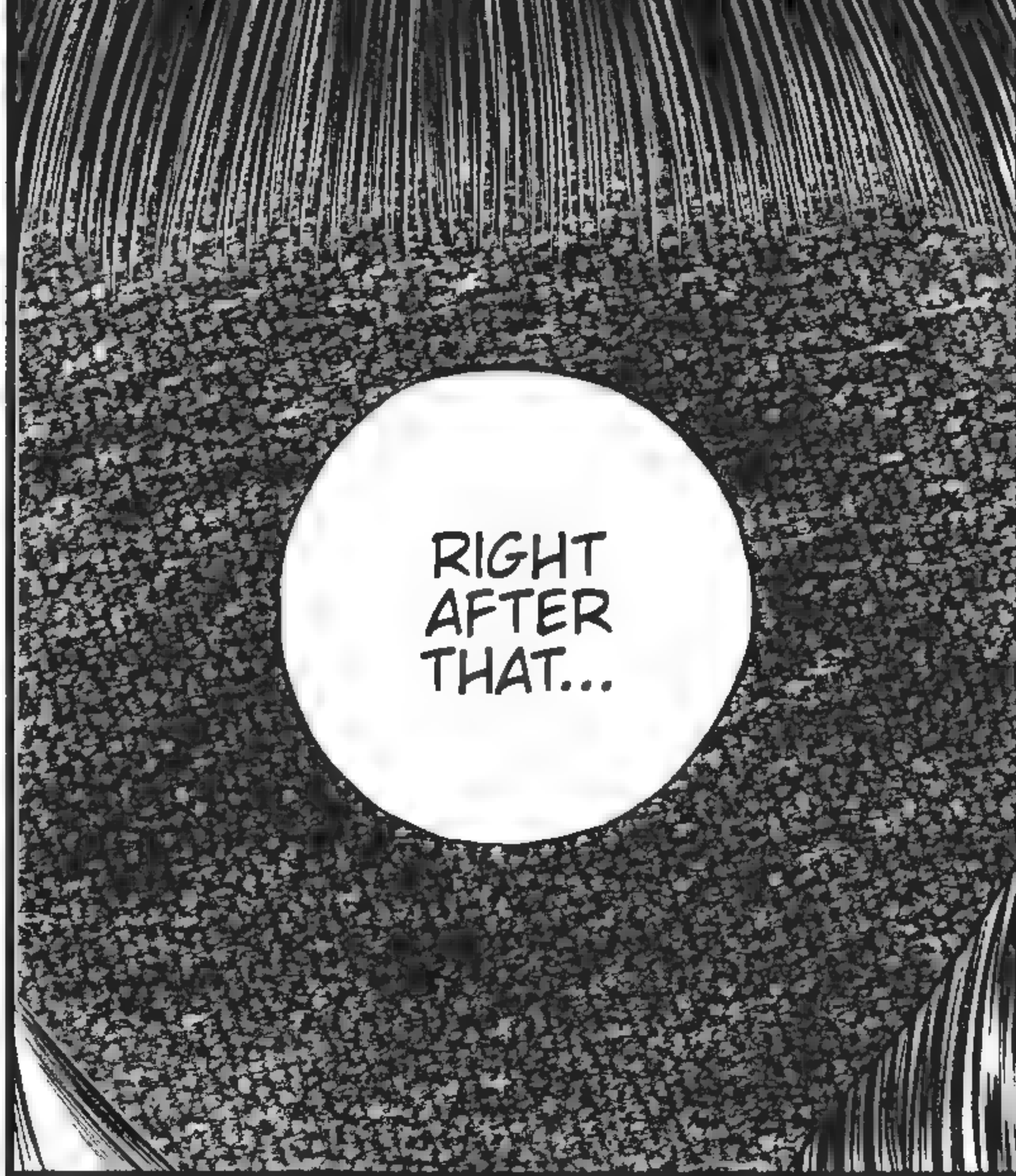
THAT
SKETCH
OF ME.



!



I MADE A
CATASTROPHIC
MISTAKE
AT WORK
AND...LOST
EVERYTHING.



RIGHT
AFTER
THAT...



WHY
WOULD
YOU DRAW
THAT?



I'M NOT
SUPPOSED
TO BE A
FACELESS
SHADOW!

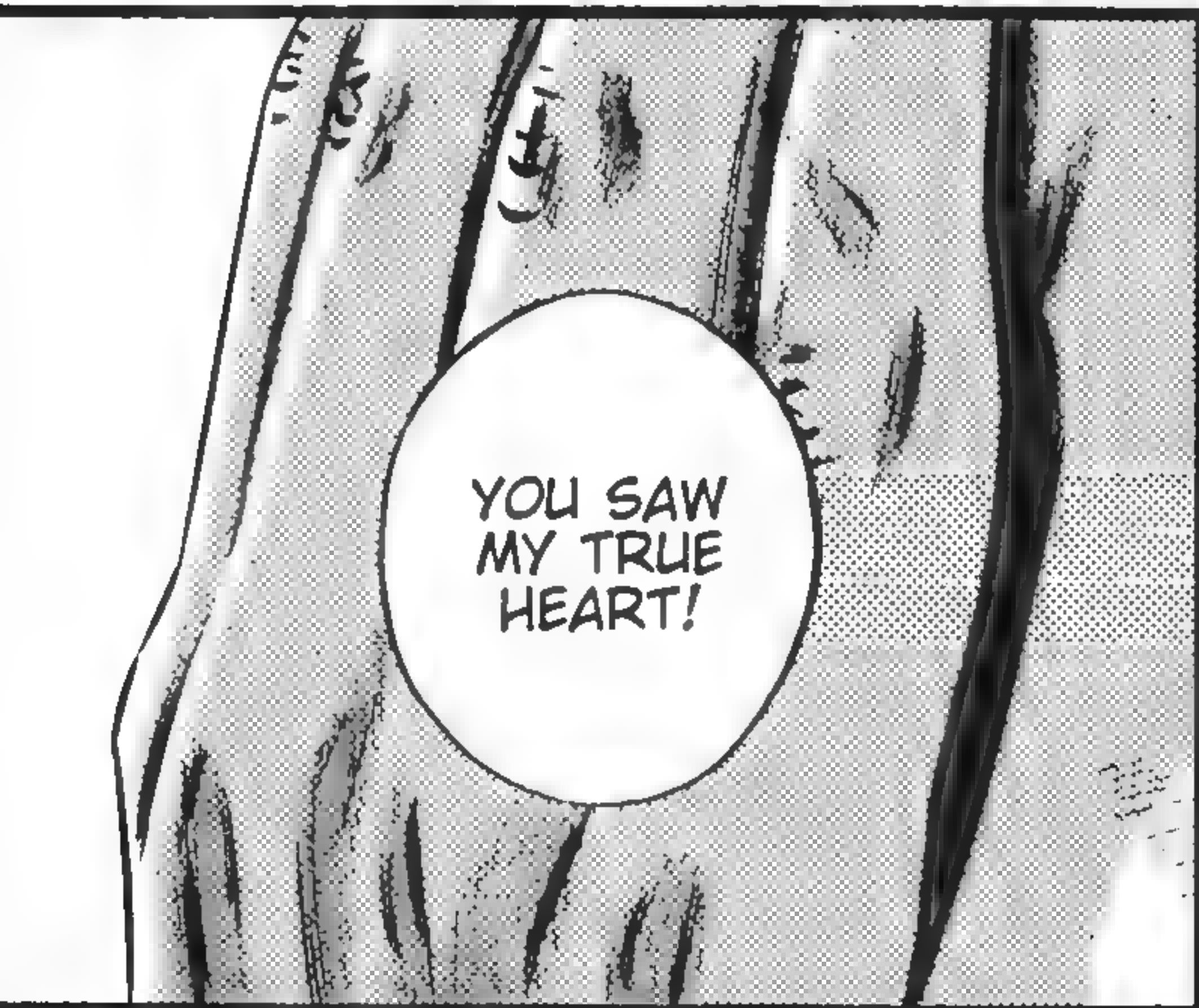
I'M...

I...



I WAS A
CLOUD!
BRIGHT
AND SOFT
AND PURE!
DON'T YOU
REMEMBER...

NANAKO
?!!



YOU SAW
MY TRUE
HEART!



PLEASE...

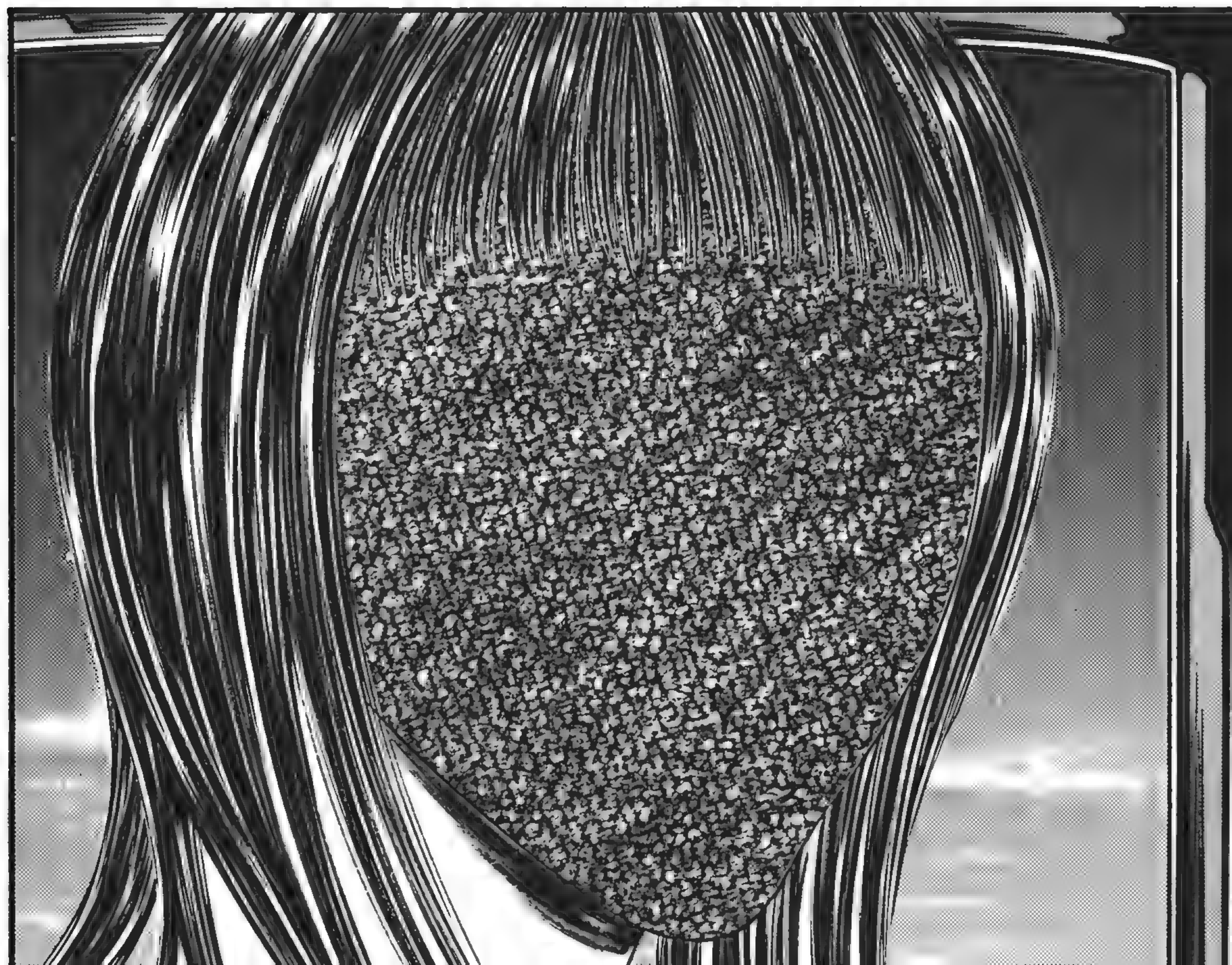


YOU SAW
IT, RIGHT?
YOU MUST
HAVE!



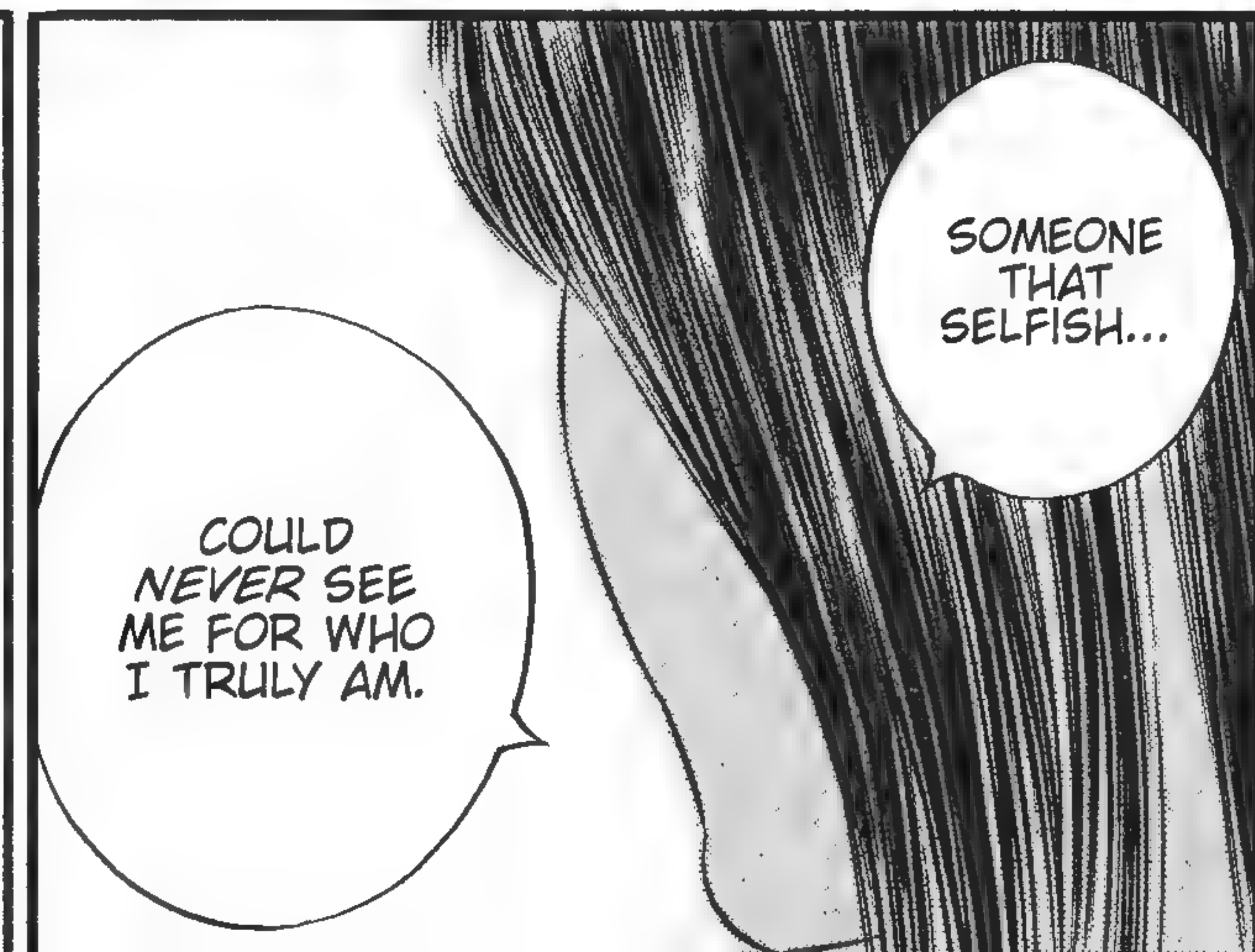
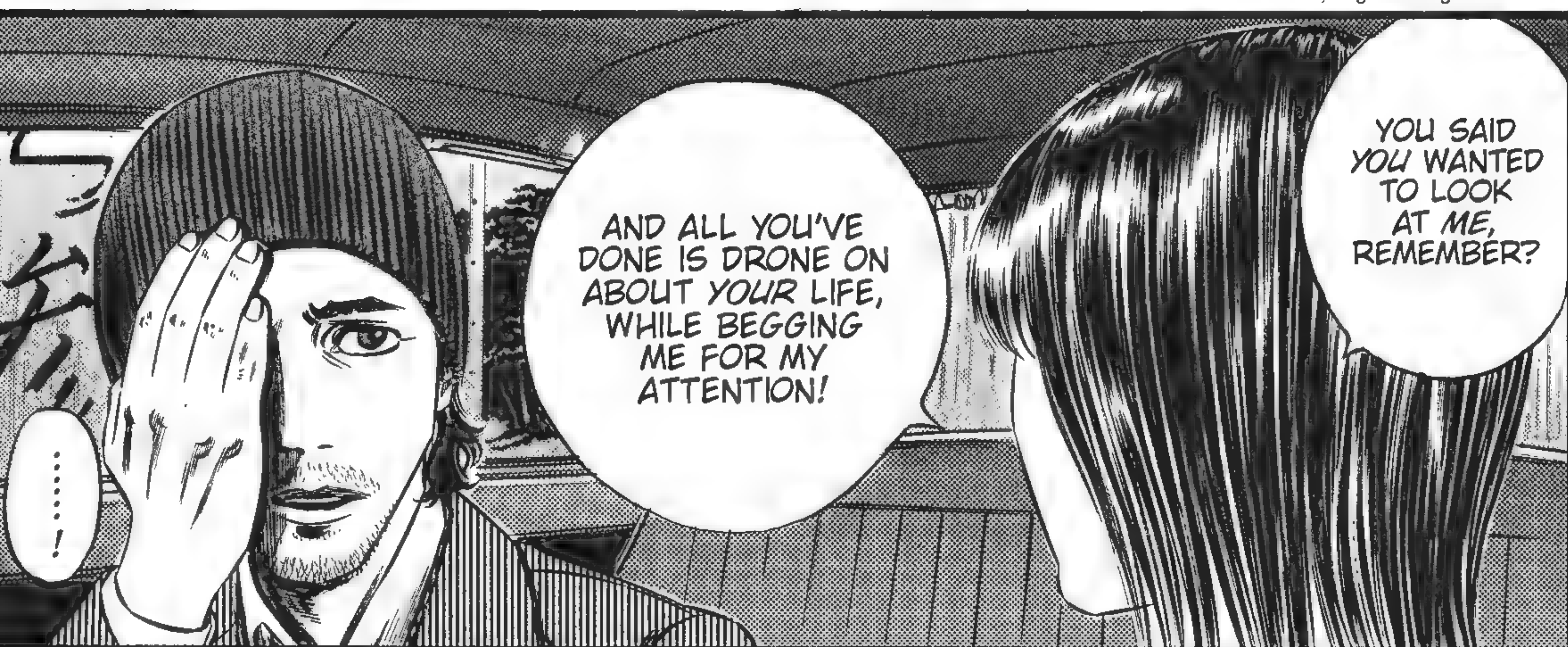
WON'T YOU
LOOK AT ME
AGAIN?

AT MY
HEART...



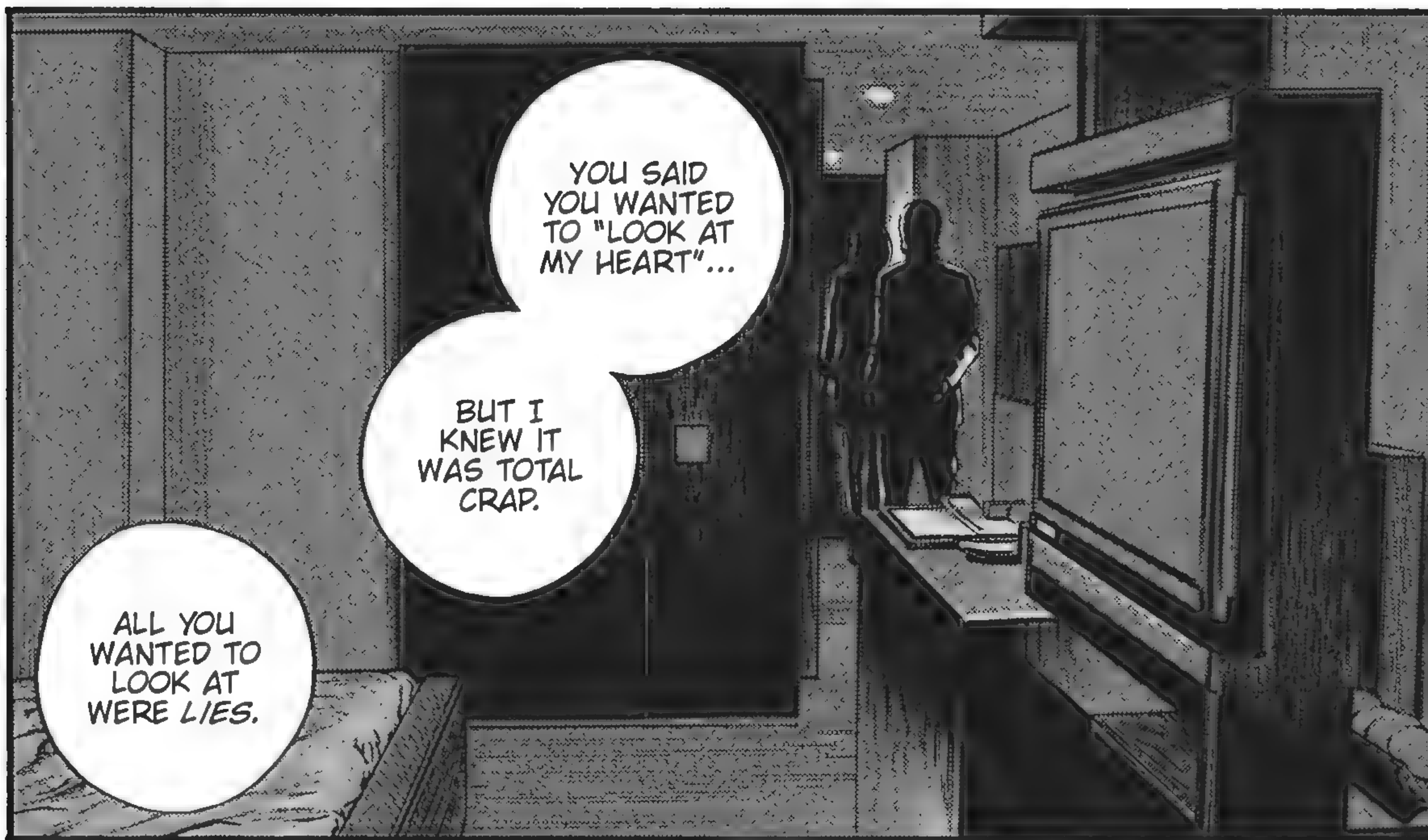


Graffiti: Naoto was here, Higashi High





IT'S JUST
LIKE THAT
NIGHT IN THE
HOTEL.



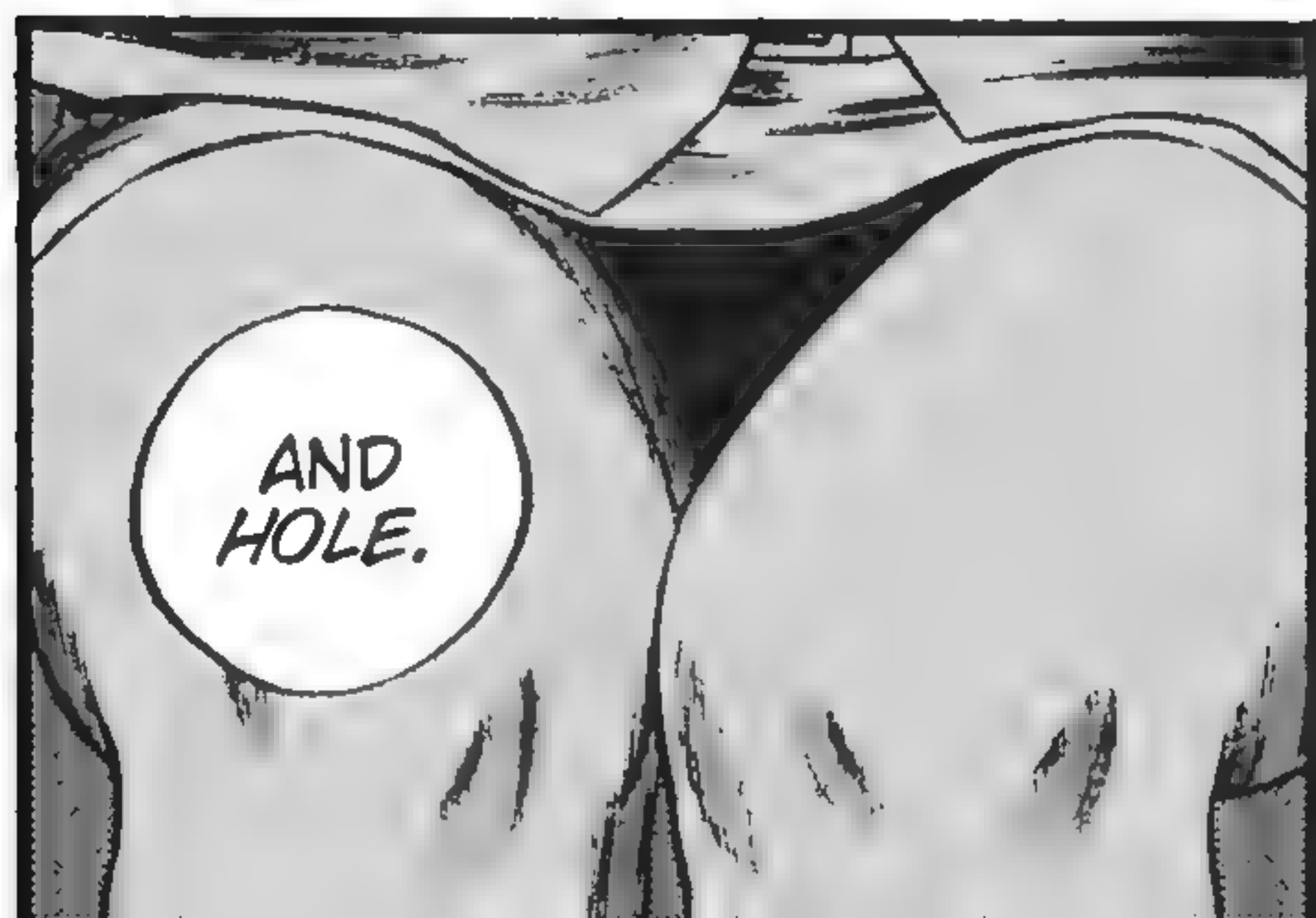
YOU SAID
YOU WANTED
TO "LOOK AT
MY HEART"...

BUT I
KNEW IT
WAS TOTAL
CRAP.

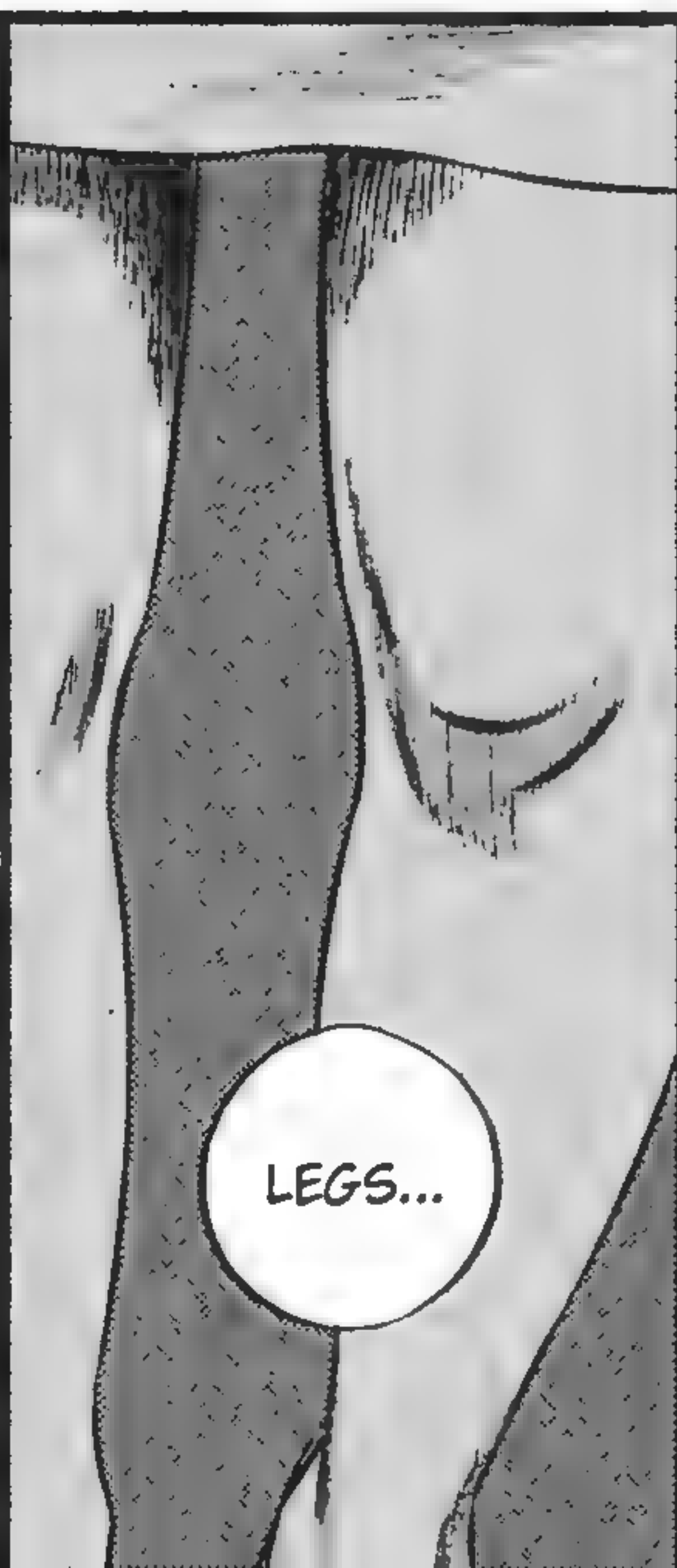
ALL YOU
WANTED TO
LOOK AT
WERE LIES.



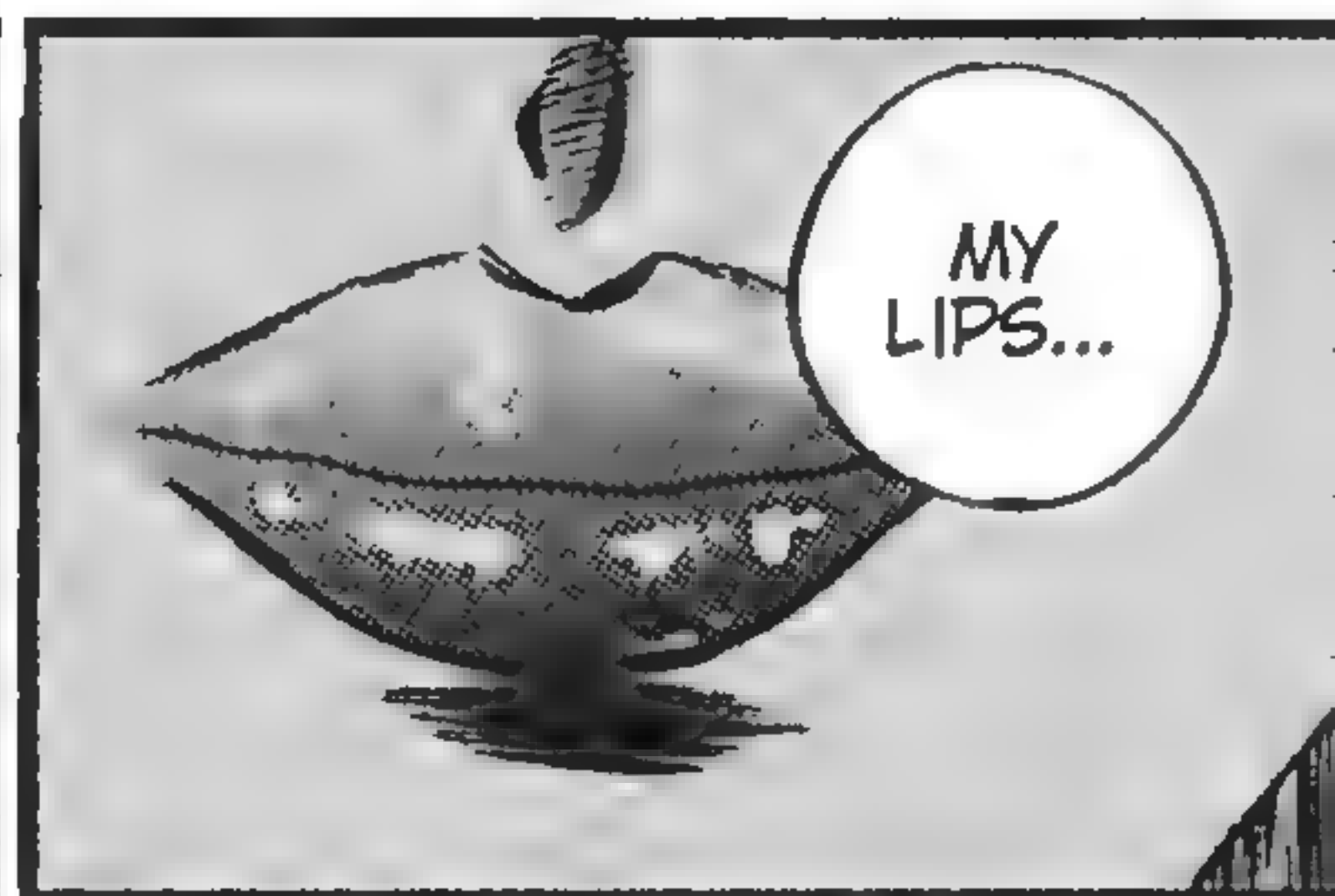
HIPS...



AND
HOLE.



LEGS...



MY
LIPS...



CHEST...



EVERY
SINGLE THING
YOU SAID AND
DID WAS A LIE
TO GET AT
THEM.



AND
YOUR
JUNK.



YOUR
CASH...



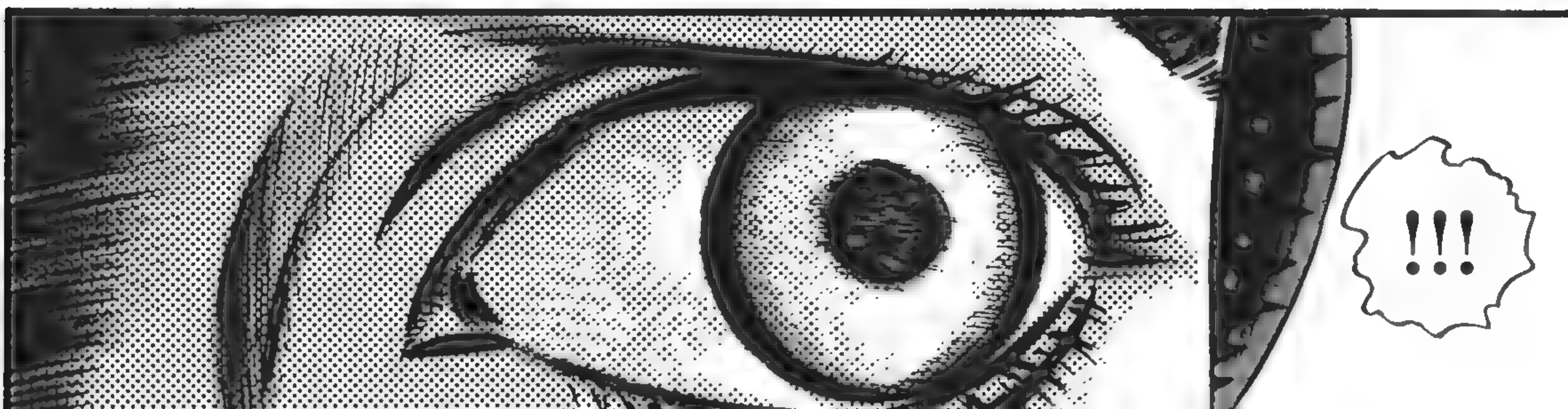
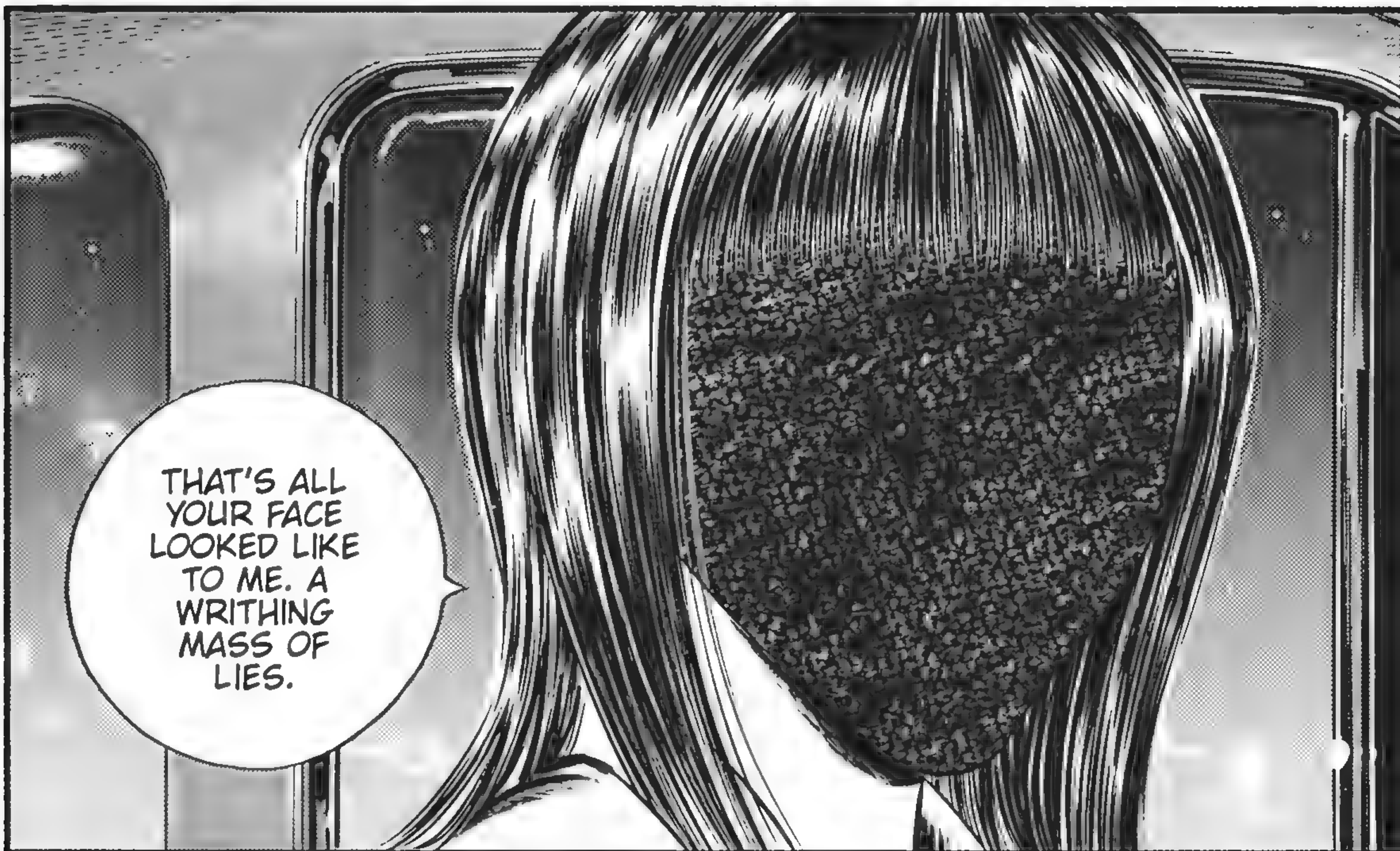
YOUR
FLIRTING...



AND SO,
WHEN
I DREW
YOU...

I CRUSHED
YOUR LIES
WITH MY
PENCIL.

DESTROYED
YOUR LYING
FEATURES.





BESIDES,
YOU KEEP
REPEATING
YOURSELF!

THIS WHOLE
"CONVERSATION"
HAS JUST BEEN
YOU WHINING AD
NAUSEAM ABOUT
FEELING UNSEEN
AND BLAMING IT ON
EVERYONE *ELSE'S*
SHALLOWNESS.



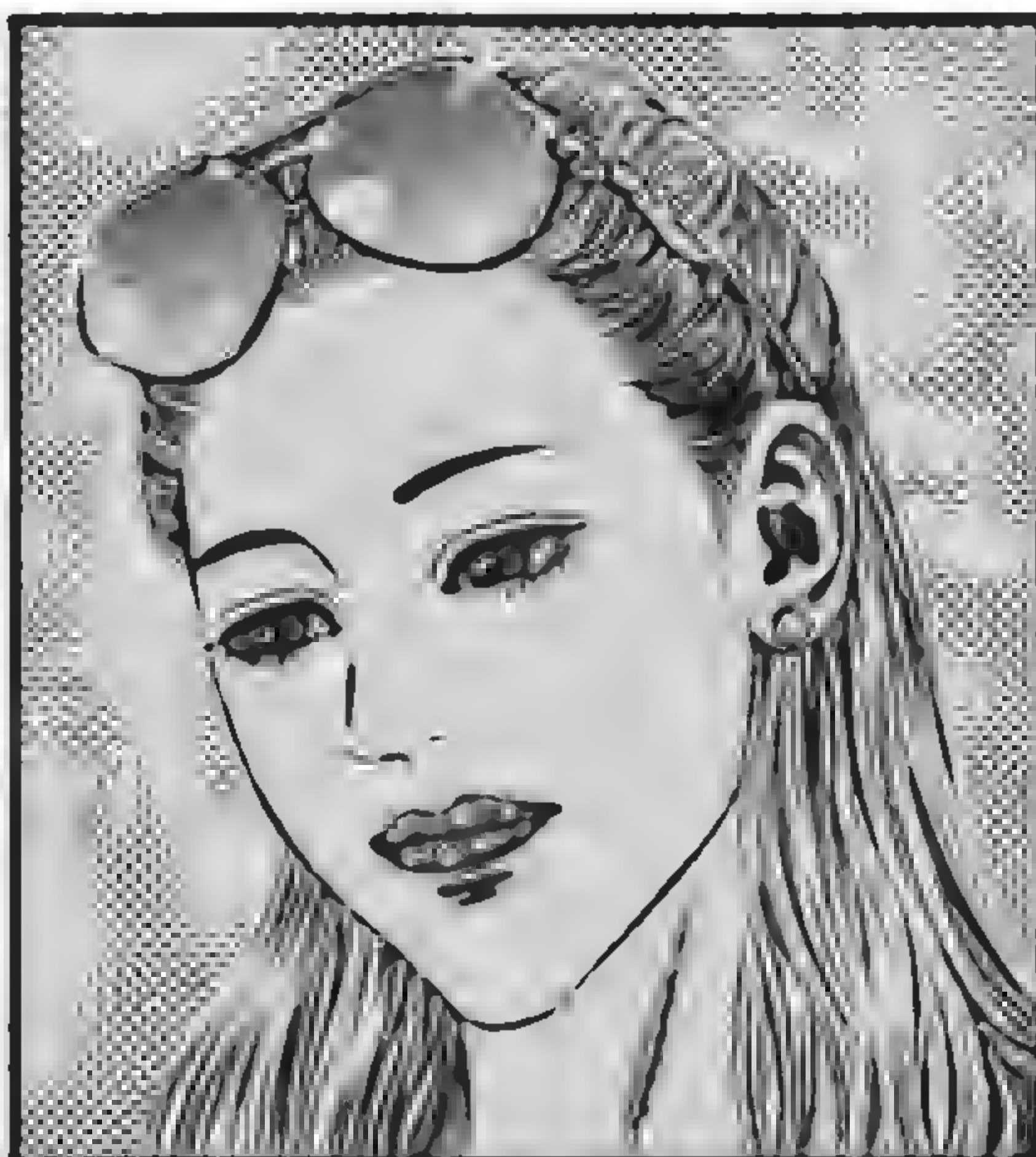
...
?!



I'M SO
SICK OF
IT!

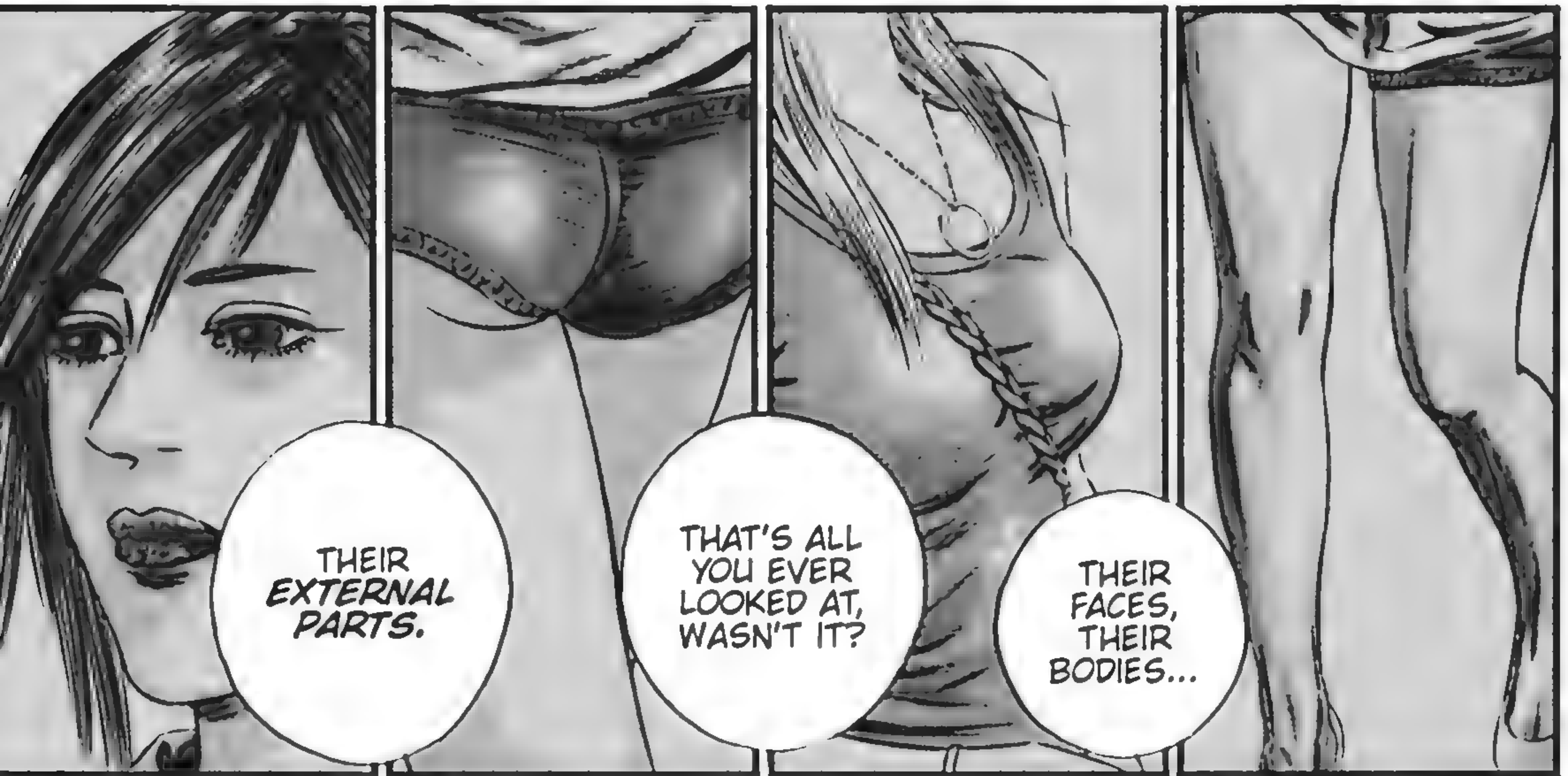


TELL ME,
NAKOSHI-SAN. YOU
ACT LIKE YOU'RE SO
NOBLE AND PURE,
BUT HAVE YOU EVER,
IN YOUR WHOLE LIFE,
TRIED TO SEE IN
OTHERS WHAT YOU
WANT THEM TO
SEE IN YOU?





YOU HAVEN'T,
HAVE YOU? YOU
JUST LUSTED
AFTER CUTE
YOUNG GIRLS.



THEIR
EXTERNAL
PARTS.

THAT'S ALL
YOU EVER
LOOKED AT,
WASN'T IT?

THEIR
FACES,
THEIR
BODIES...



PWAH
PWAH

PWAH
PWAH

PWAH
PWAH

PWAH
PWAH



YOU'VE SPENT
YOUR ENTIRE
LIFE LOOKING
AT NOTHING
BUT LIES.



COLLASH



HOWLING,
"SEE ME FOR
WHO I AM
INSIDE!"

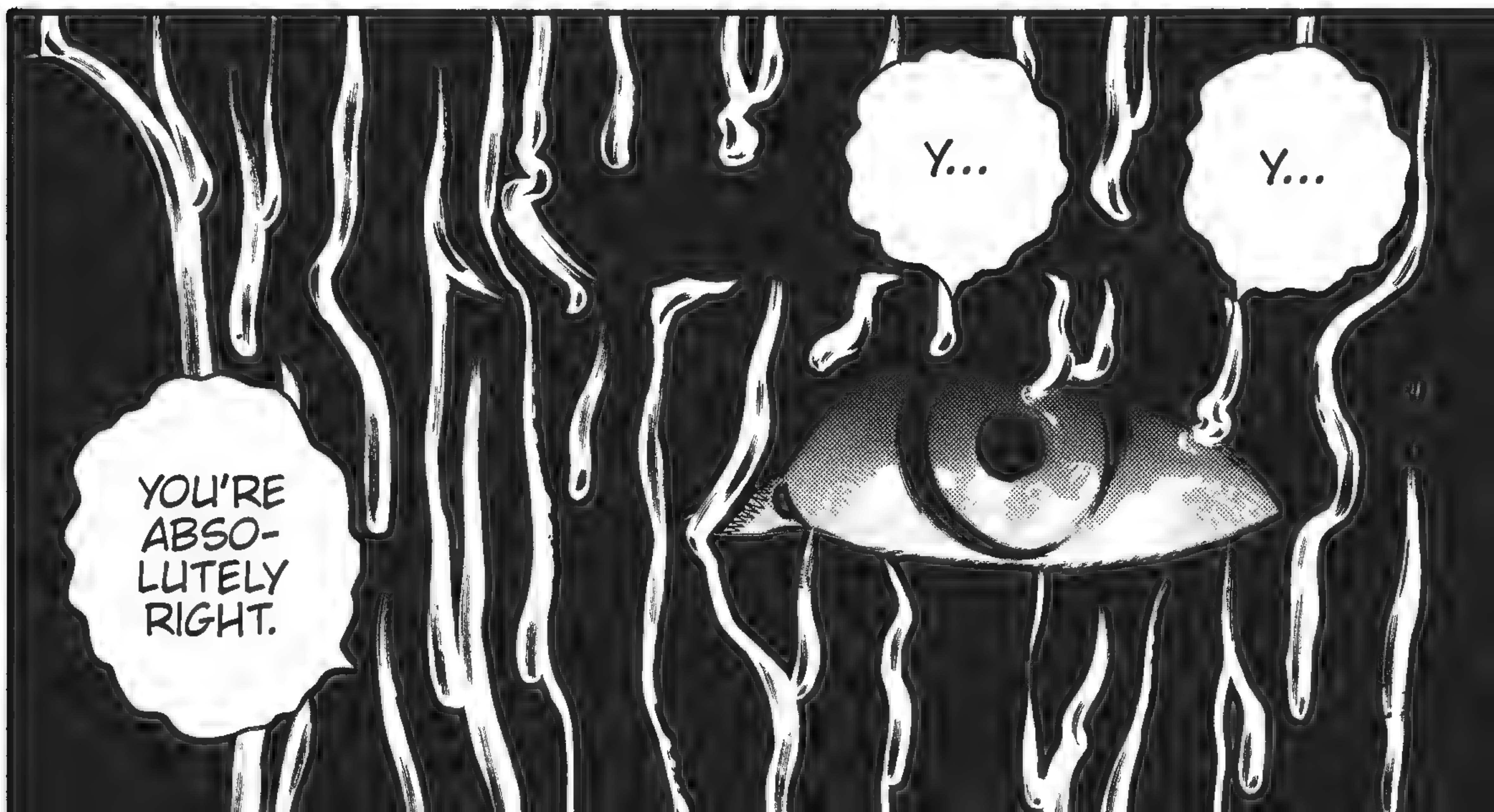
AN UGLY
CREATURE TOO
SHALLOW TO
LOOK BEYOND
A WOMAN'S
OUTER
SHELL...

YOU'RE A
SHAMELESS
HYPOCRITE.
CAN'T YOU
SEE THAT?



YOU'VE NEVER
SEEN A FRACTION
OF ANOTHER
PERSON'S HEART,
YOU PIECE OF
SHIT.





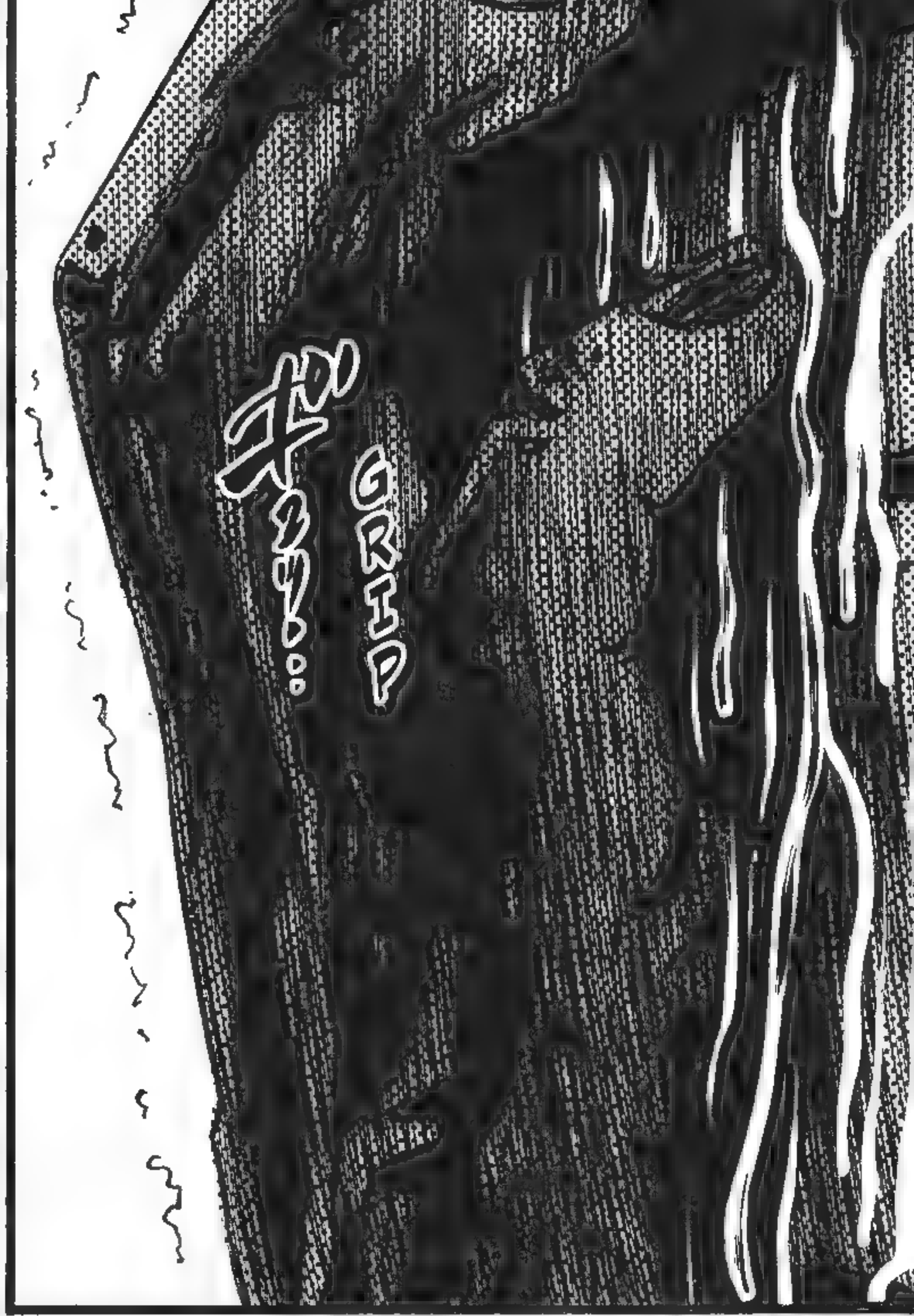


SO WHAT THE
HELL MAKES
YOU THINK A
LYING BASTARD
LIKE YOU CAN
SEE MINE?!!

...!!!



B...



I
CAN SEE
THEM! I
REALLY
CAN!!

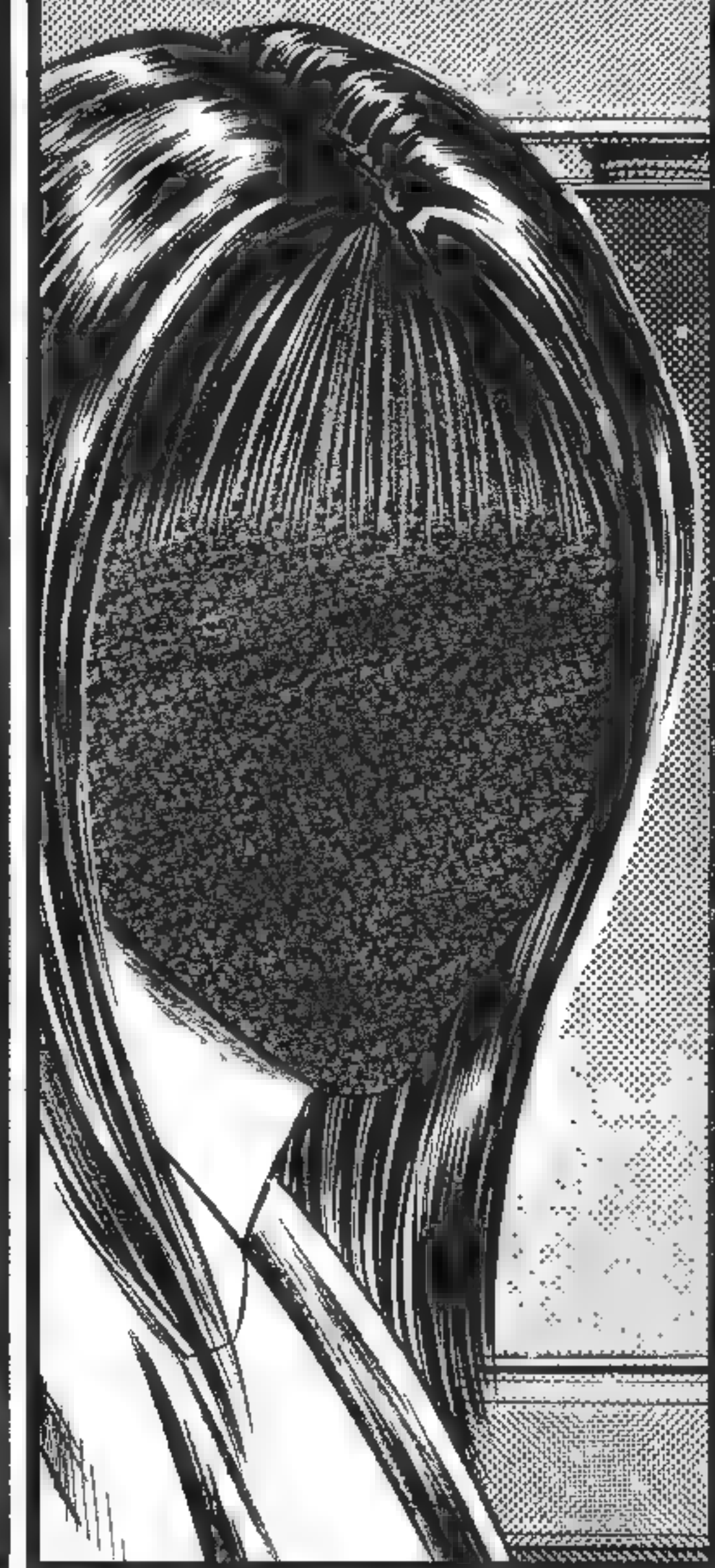
BUT
NOW...



YOU'RE
SO FULL
OF SHIT.



YOU'VE GOT
TO BE KIDDING.
EVEN AFTER ALL
THIS, YOU'RE
STILL MAKING
CLAIMS LIKE
THAT?



WHILE
SIMULTANEOUSLY
THROWING A TANTRUM
OVER HOW OTHERS
AREN'T SHOWERING
YOUR OH-SO-COMPLEX
SOUL WITH THE
ATTENTION YOU THINK
IT DESERVES. A GUY
LIKE THAT COULD
NEVER SEE ME.



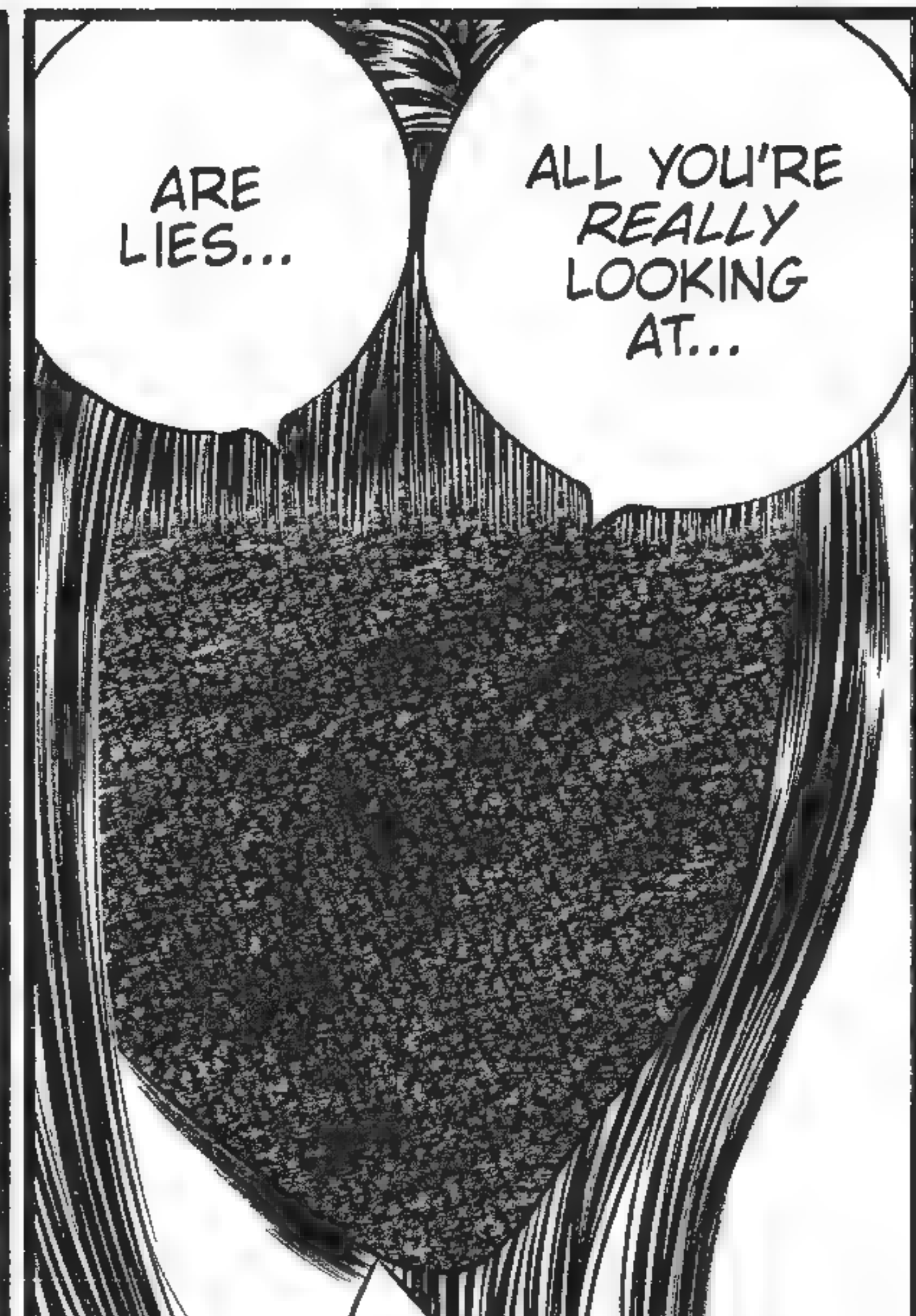
ALL YOU'VE
DONE IS RANT
AT ME--NOT
TO ME--ABOUT
YOUR OWN
SHIT...



LIES.
NOTHING
MORE.

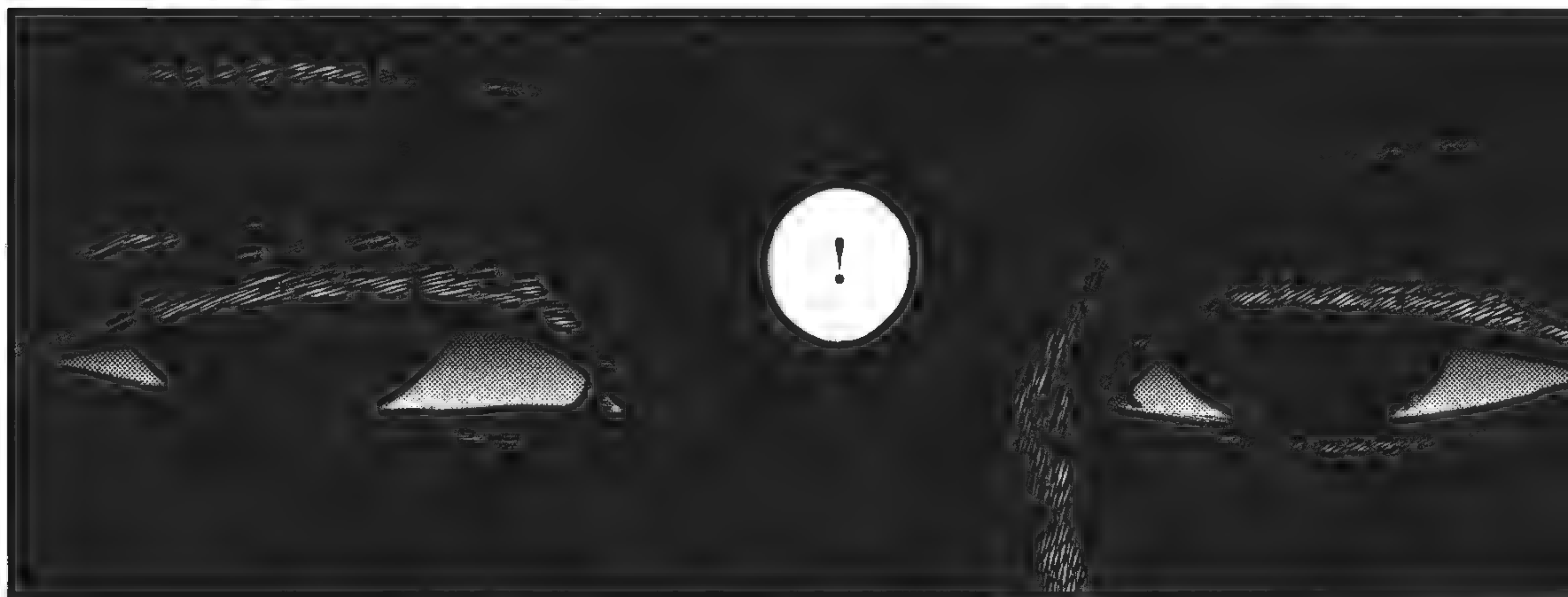
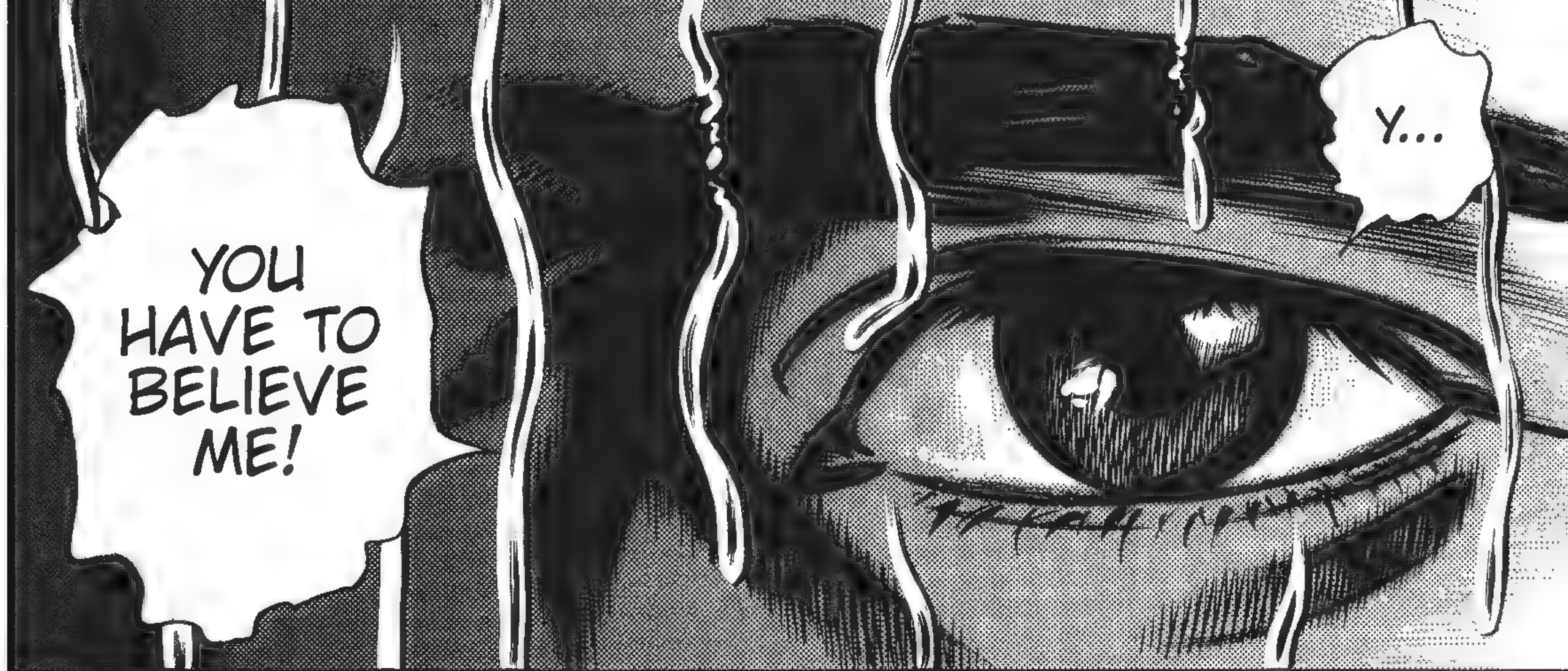


LIES...



ARE
LIES...

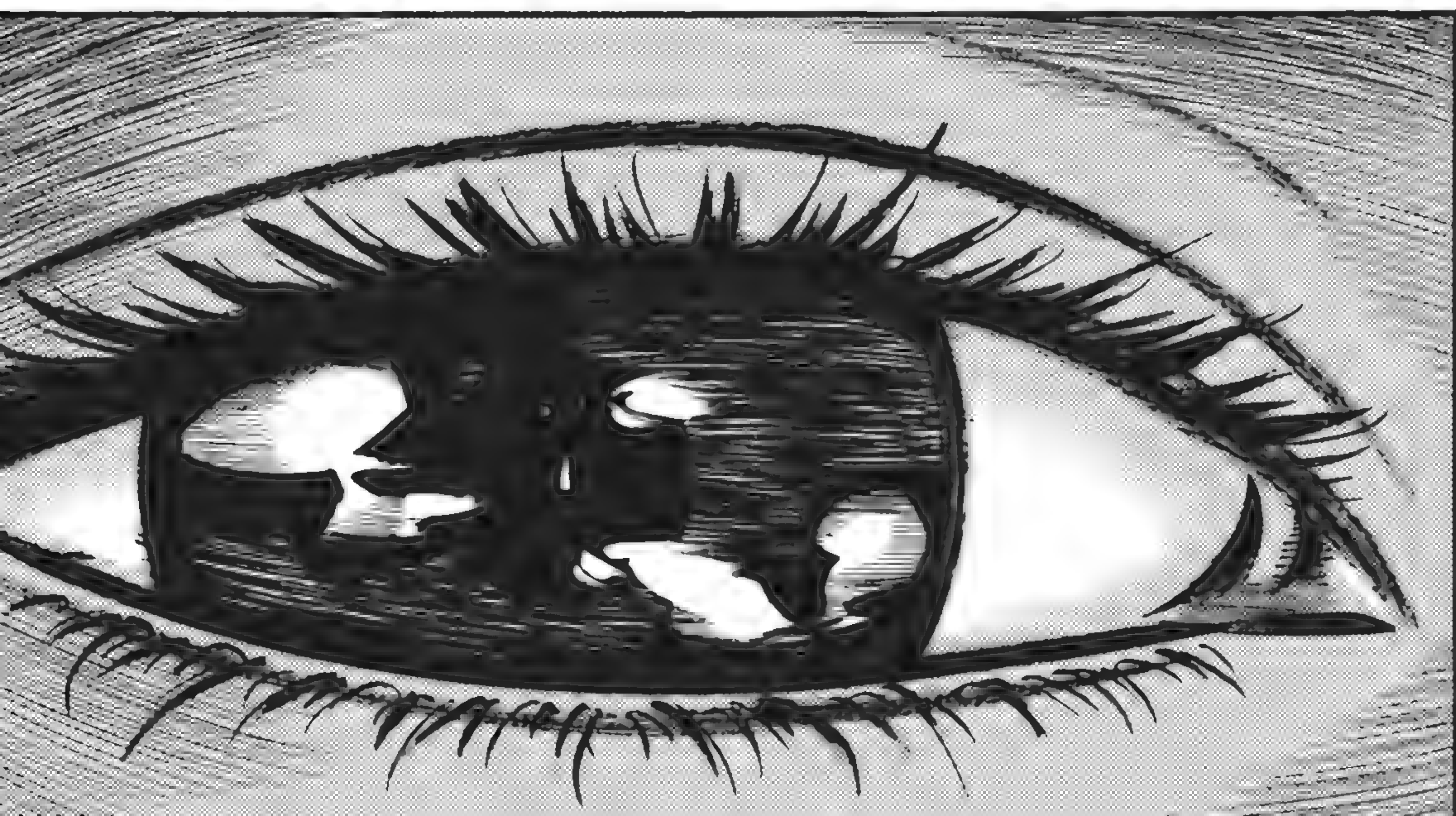
ALL YOU'RE
REALLY
LOOKING
AT...



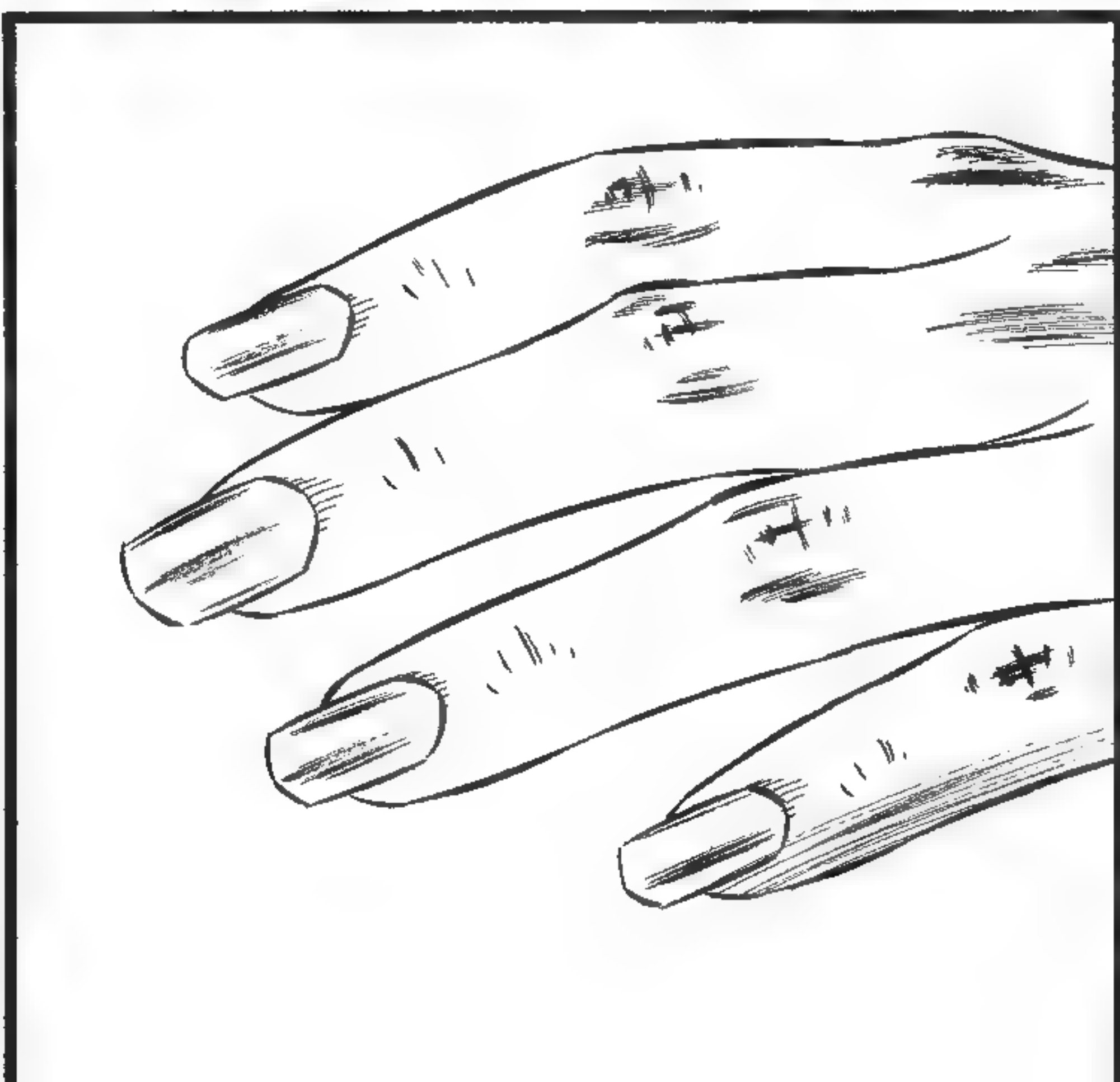
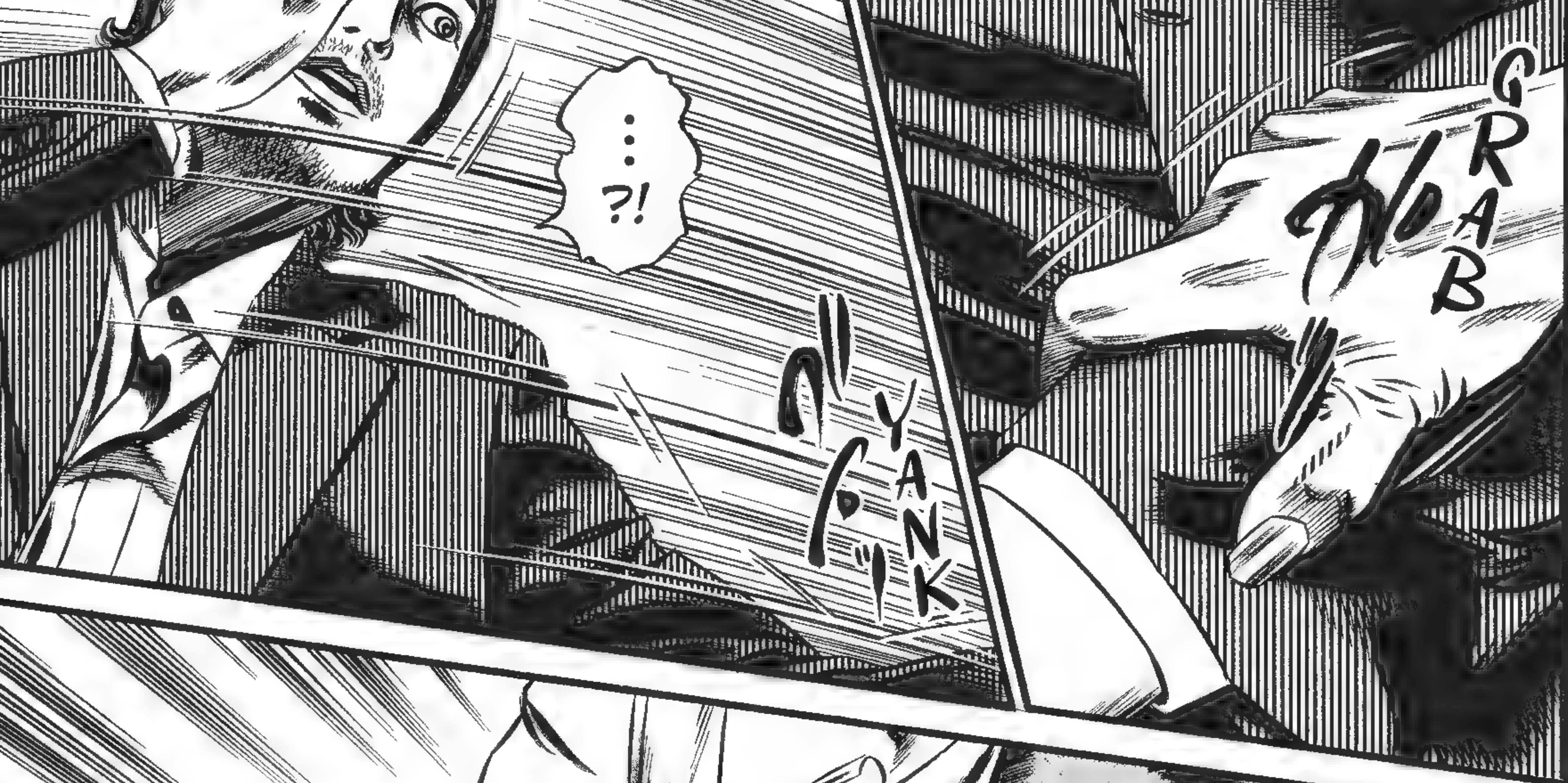




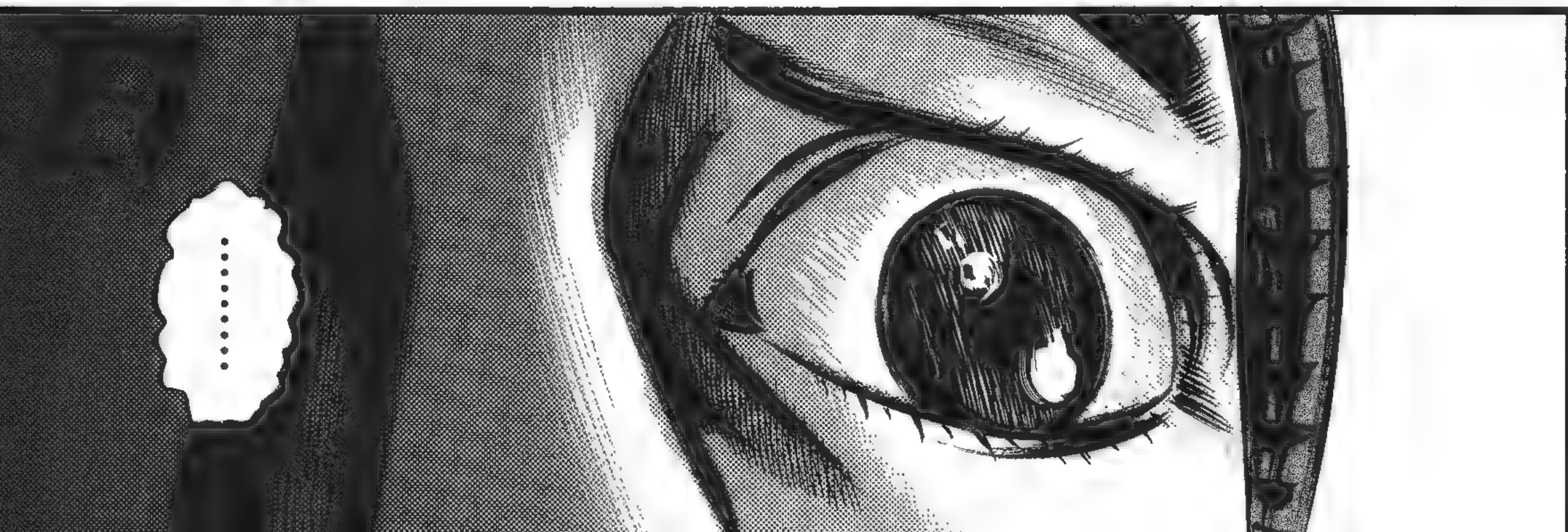
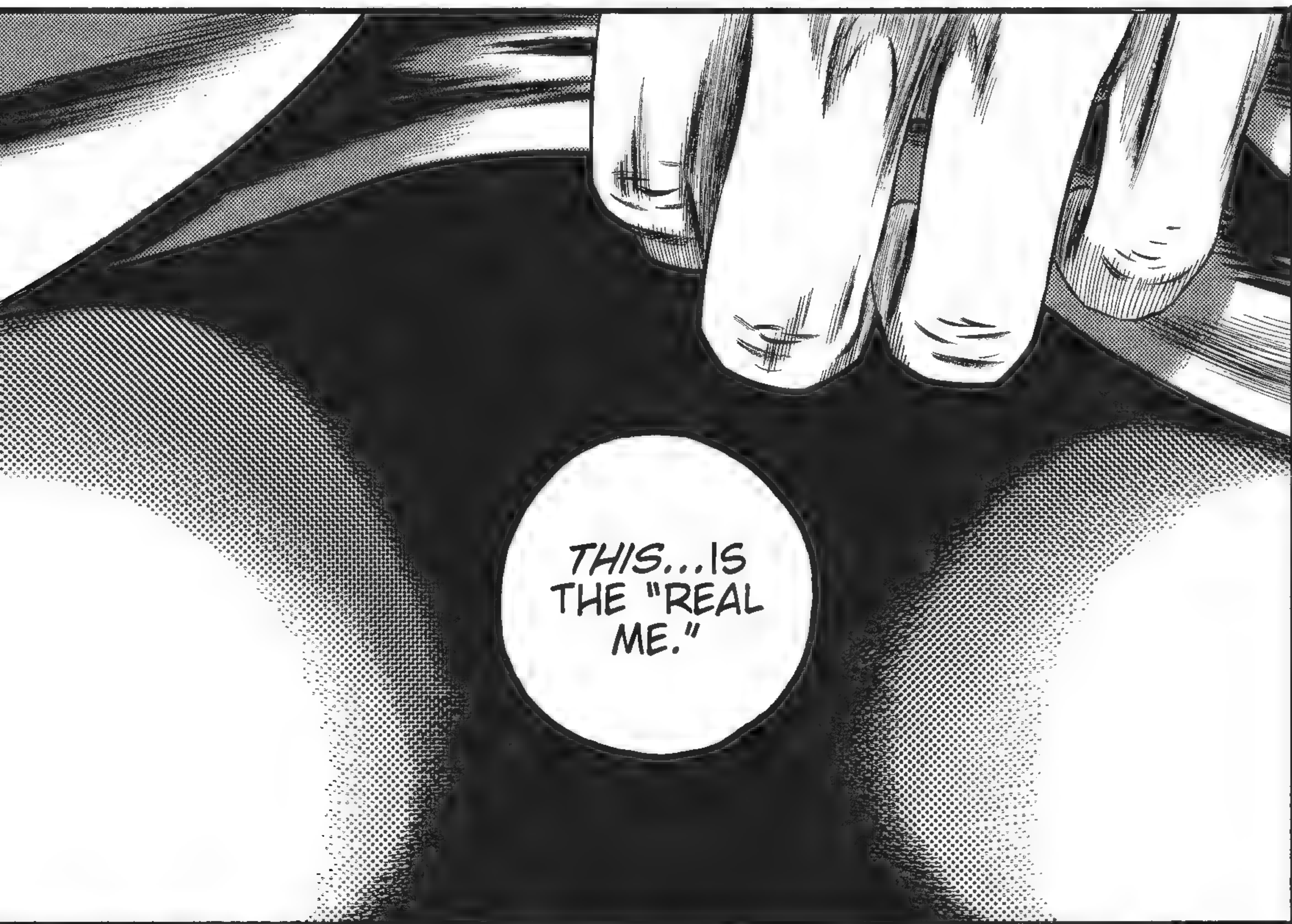
DO YOU
PROMISE?

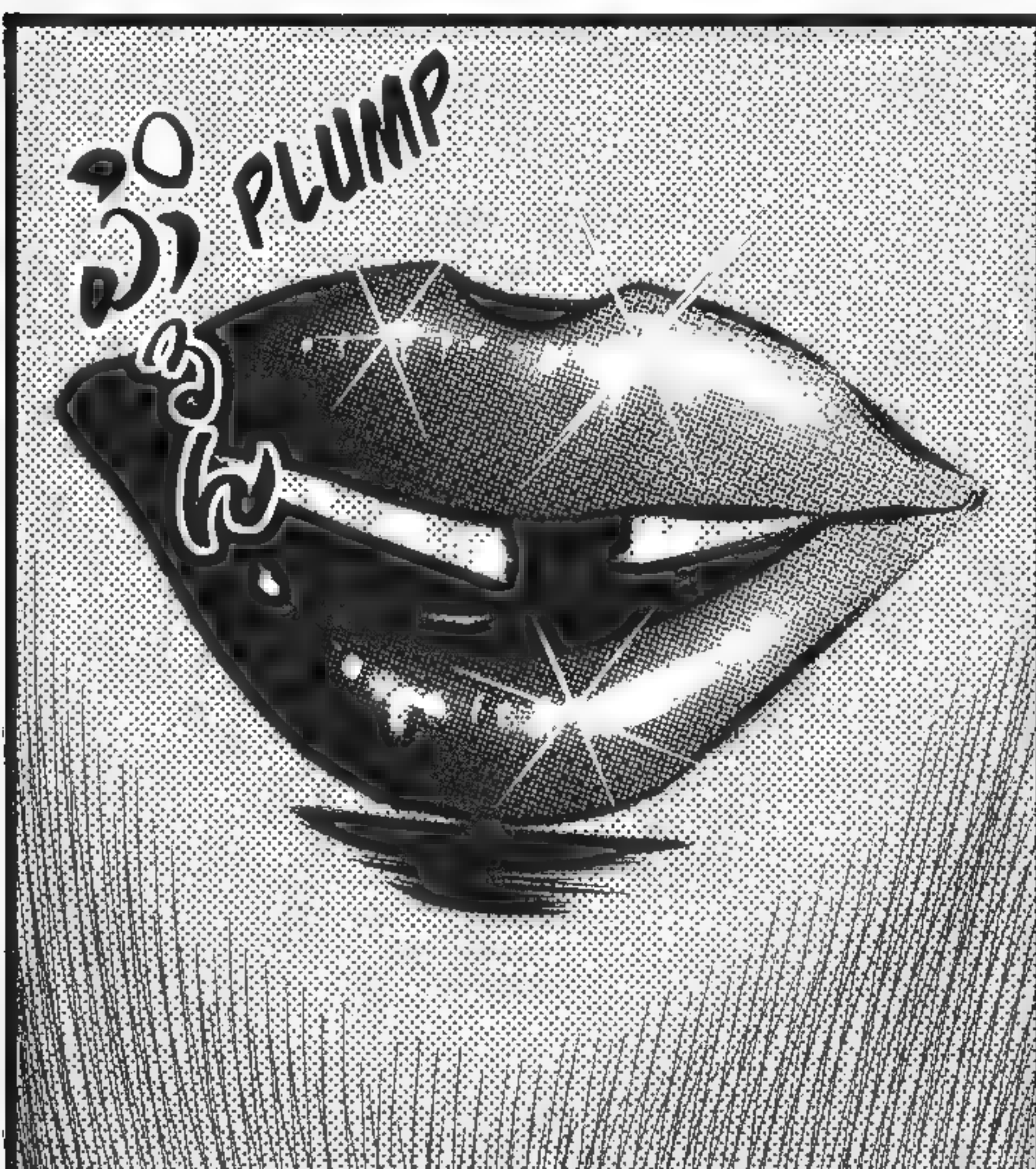














WHAT'S THE
POINT IN
LOOKING FOR
HEARTS?



LET'S
GIVE IT UP
AND CHECK
OUT EACH
OTHER'S
BODIES.



?

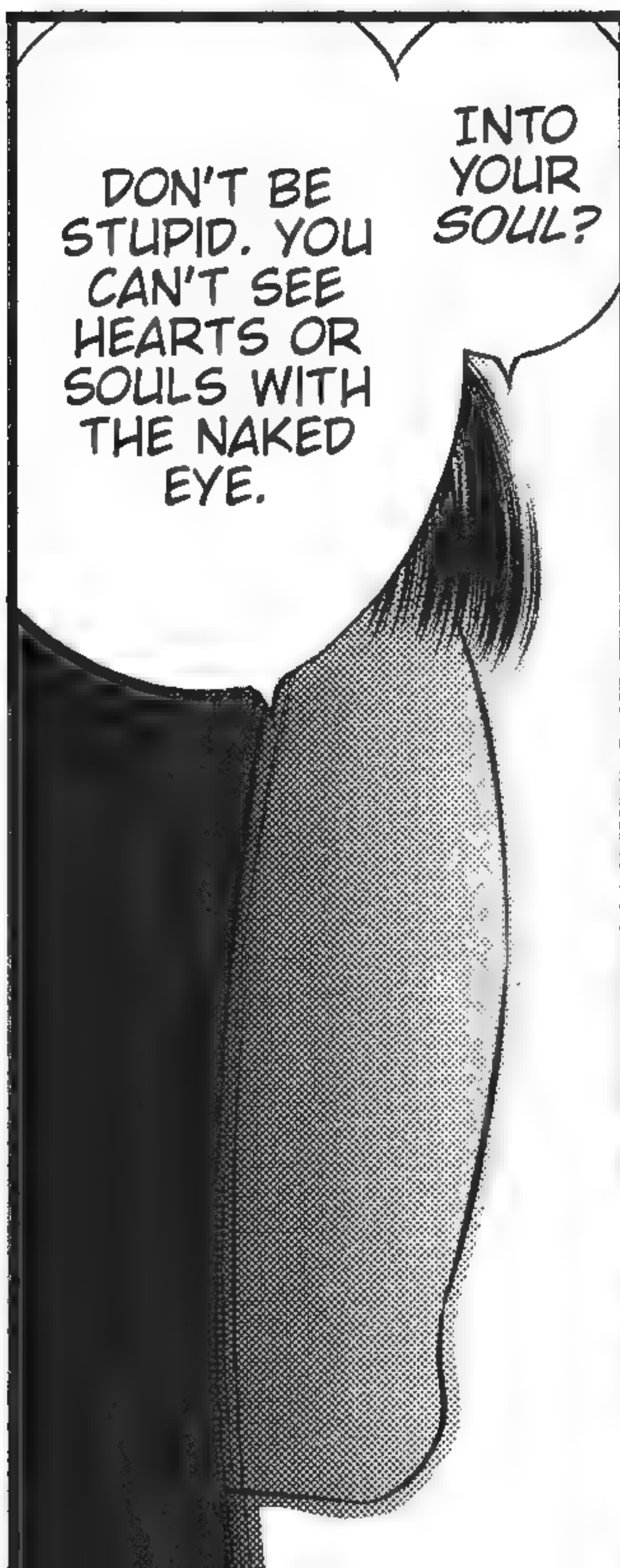
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU,
NANAKO?



WHAT
...?



YOU USED
TO SEE
NOTHING BUT
HEARTS!



DON'T BE
STUPID. YOU
CAN'T SEE
HEARTS OR
SOULS WITH
THE NAKED
EYE.

INTO
YOUR
SOUL?



REMEMBER? YOU
WERE THE ONLY
ONE TO EVER SEE
PAST MY UGLY
EXTERIOR...AND
INTO MY SOUL.





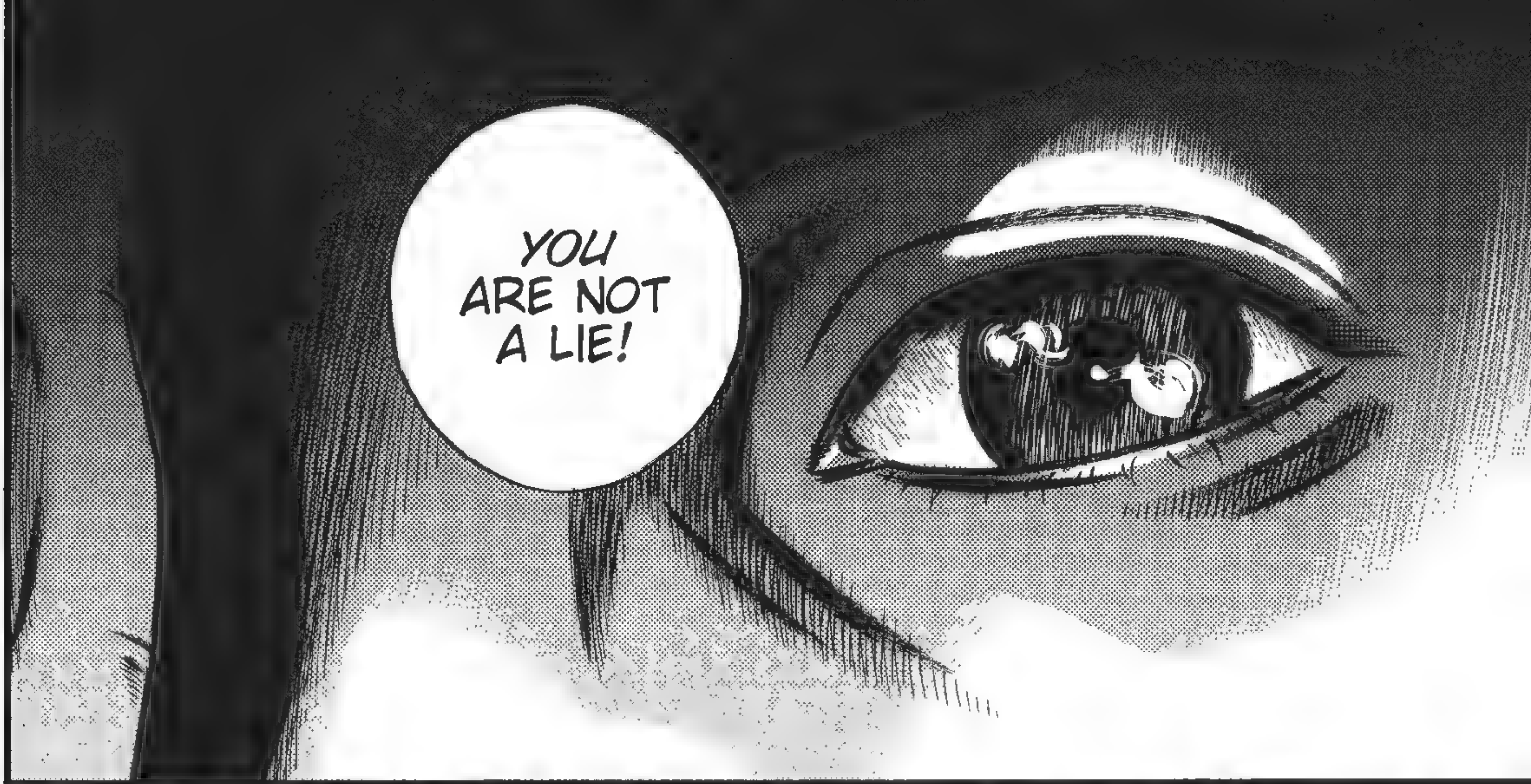
BUT YOU
COULD!

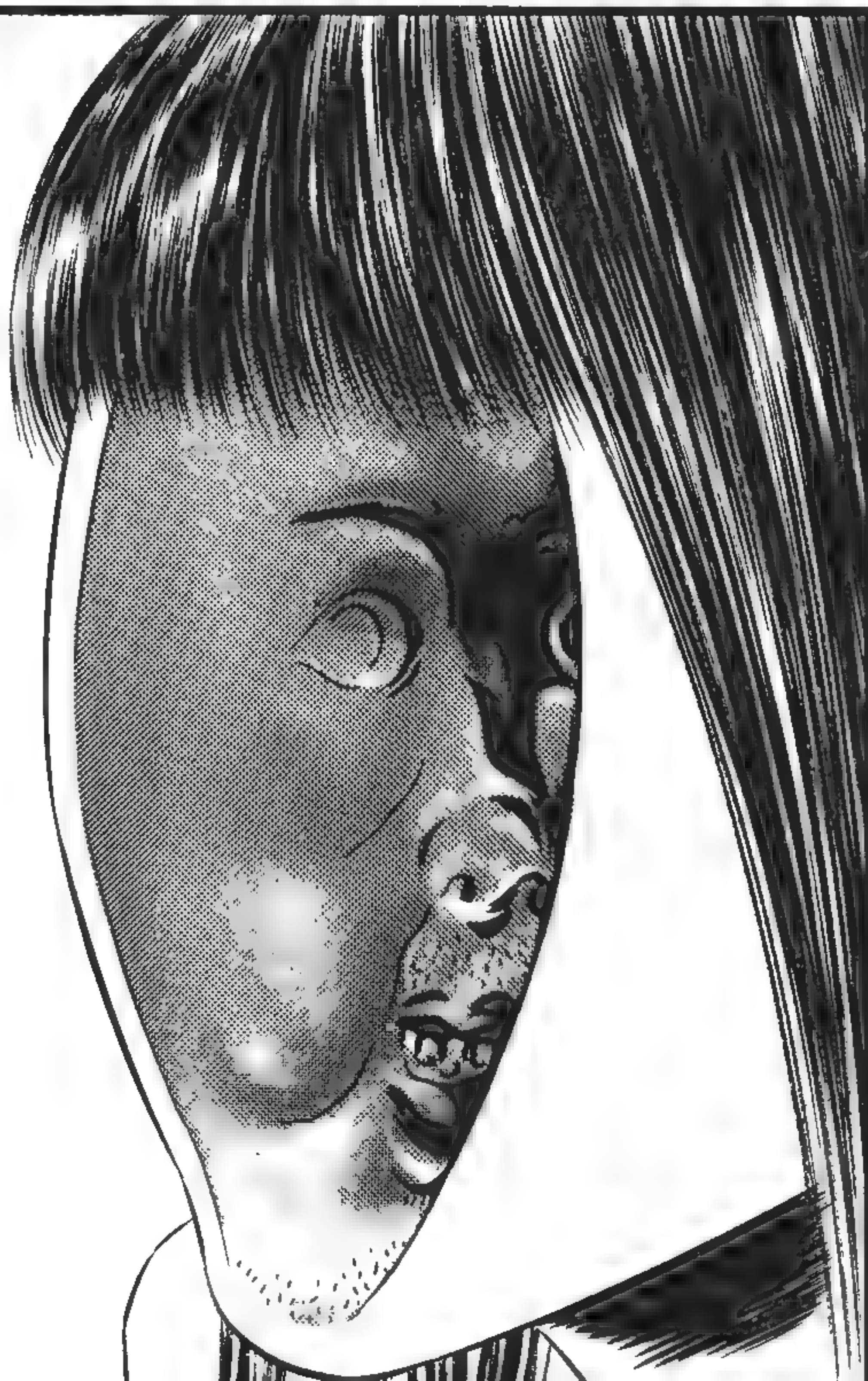
WHO?
ME?

YES! SEEING
PEOPLE'S
TRUE
SELVES...

THAT WAS
WHAT MADE
YOU YOU!

!







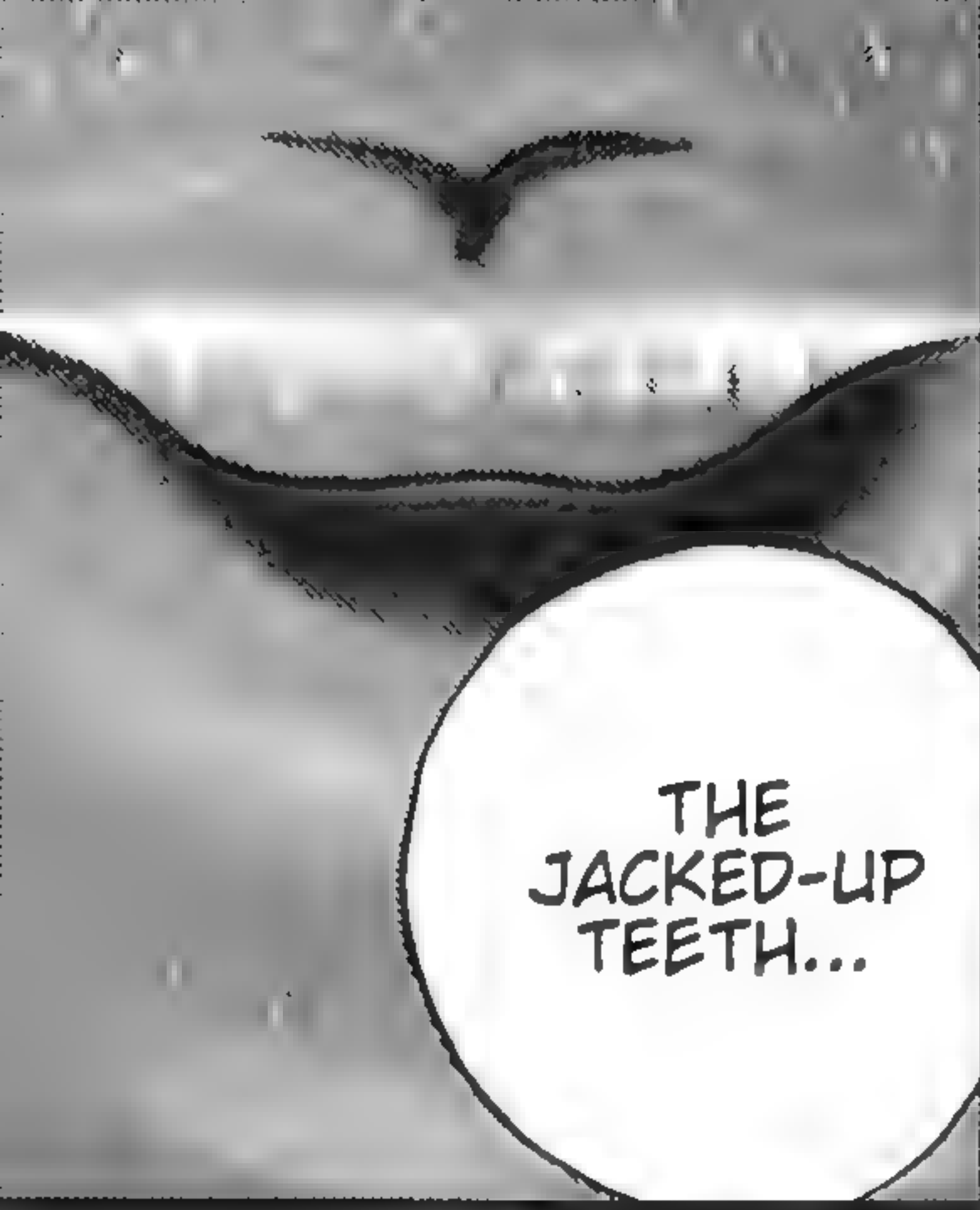
WH...

WHO IS
THAT?

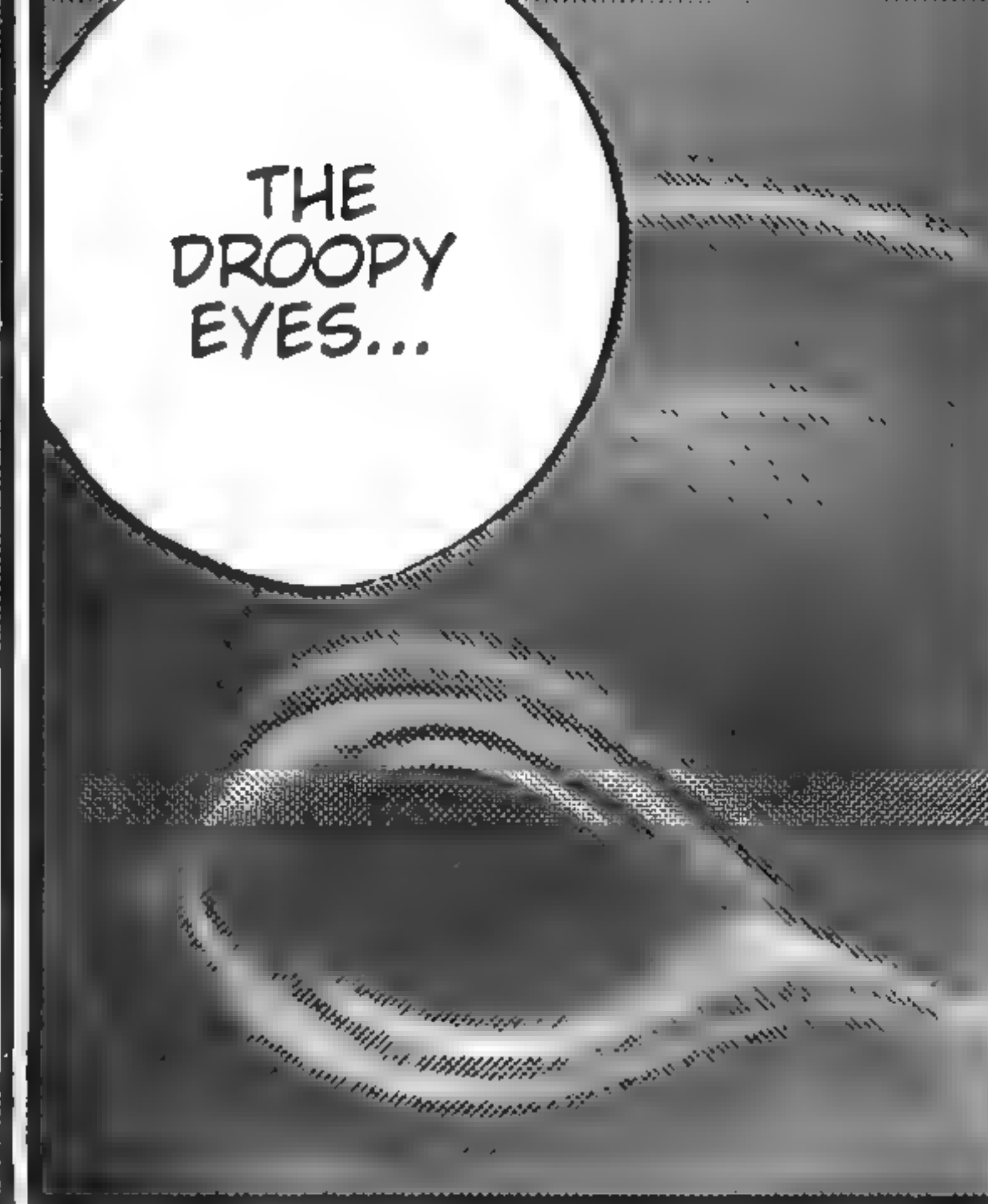


I...I DON'T
RECOGNIZE
THIS FACE
AT ALL.

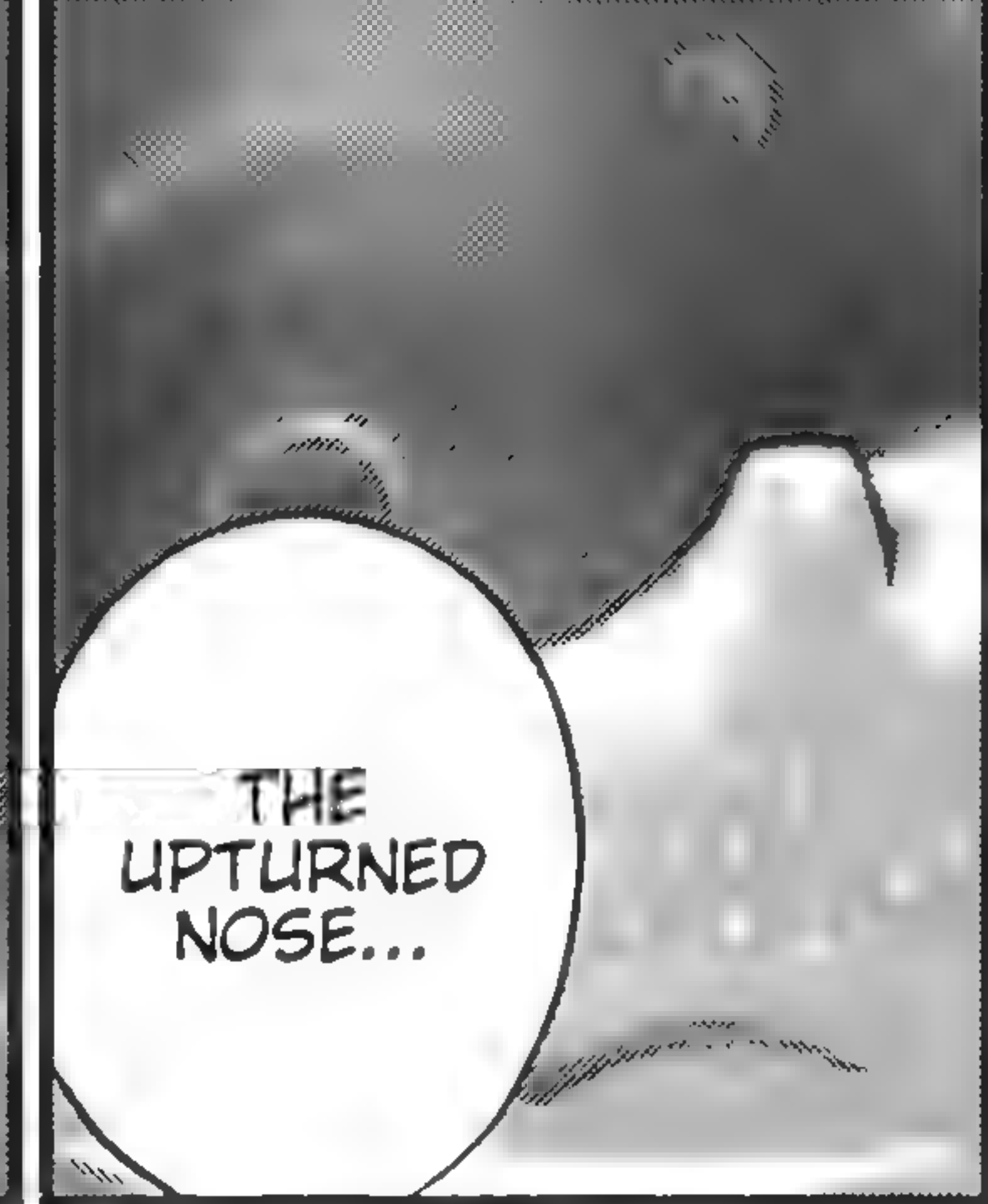
I'VE
NEVER
SEEN IT
BEFORE.



THE
JACKED-UP
TEETH...



THE
DROOPY
EYES...



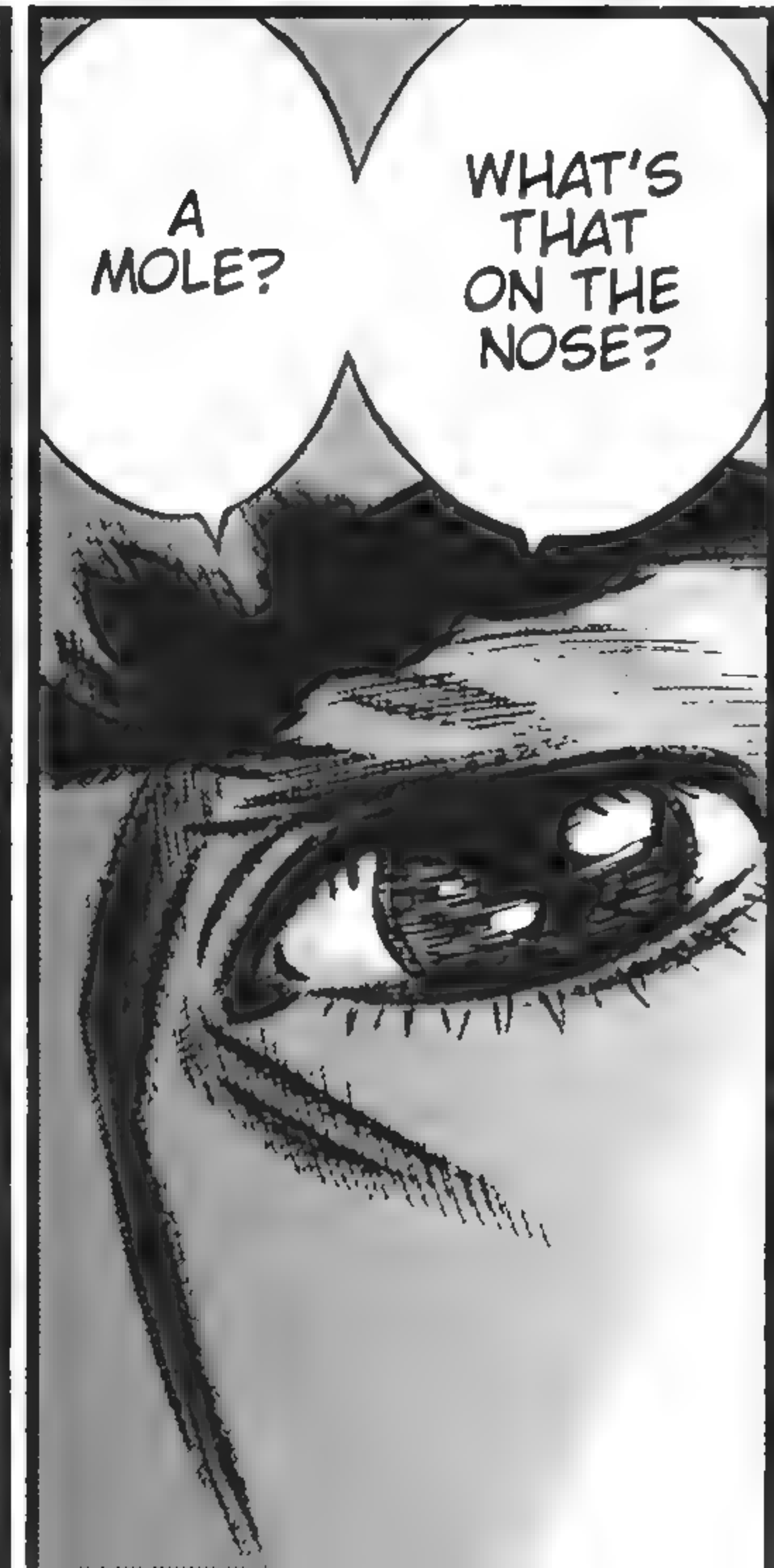
THE
UPTURNED
NOSE...



AND...

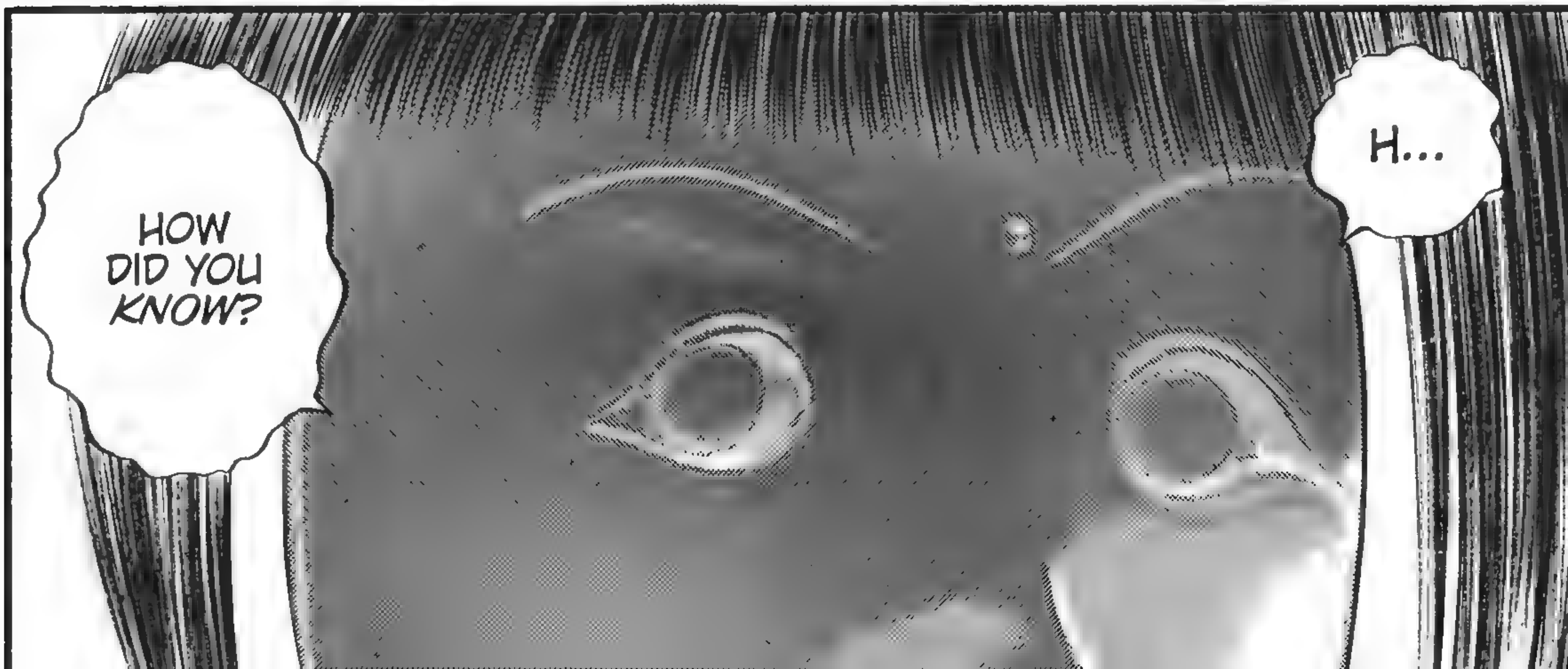


!!!



A
MOLE?

WHAT'S
THAT
ON THE
NOSE?





A
MAN...?



FACIAL
HAIR?



IN MY
WHOLE
LIFE, I'VE
NEVER
SEEN...

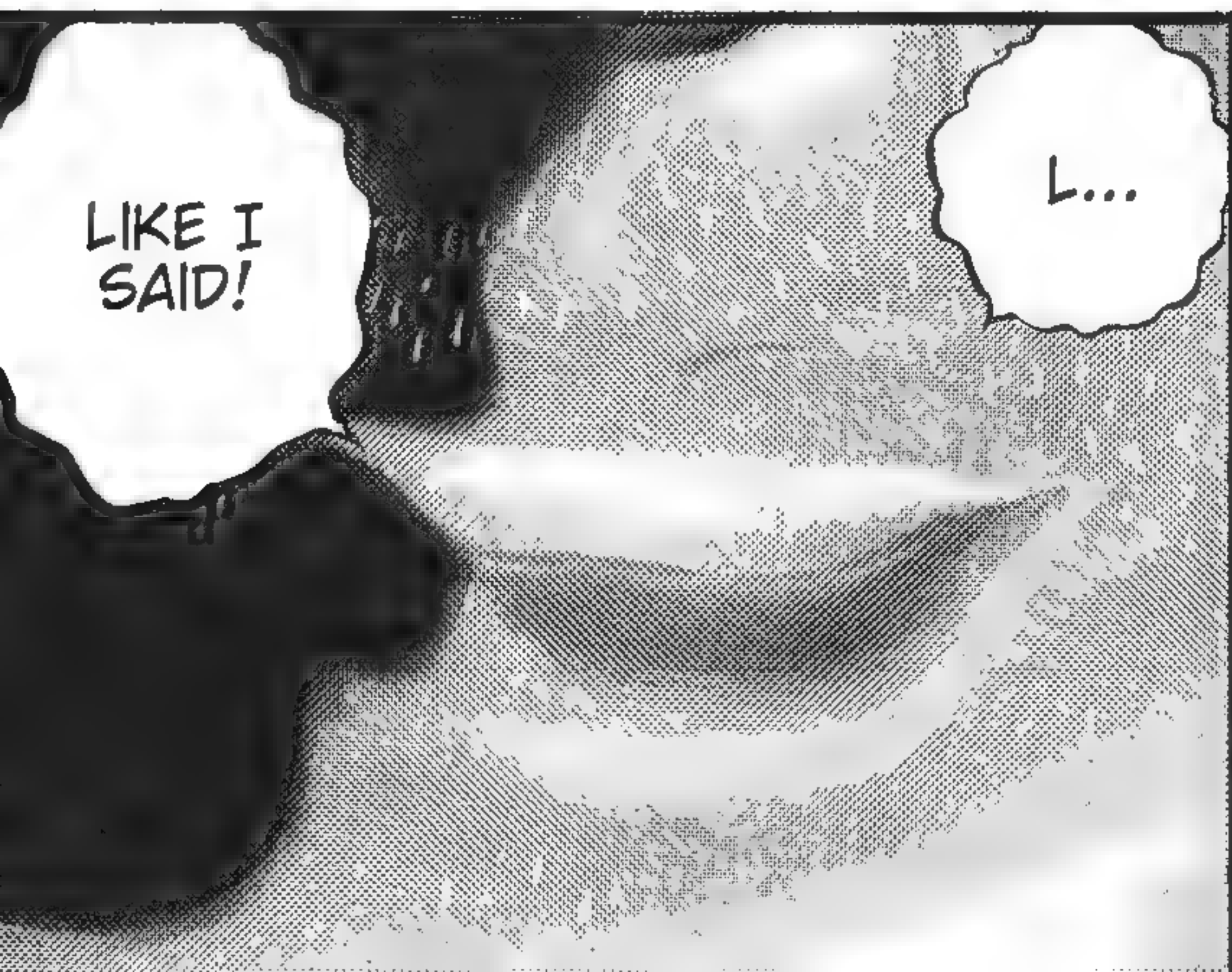
H...HOW
SHOULD I
KNOW?!



WHY?
HOW...

HOW...?

CAN YOU
SEE IT?!



LIKE I
SAID!

L...

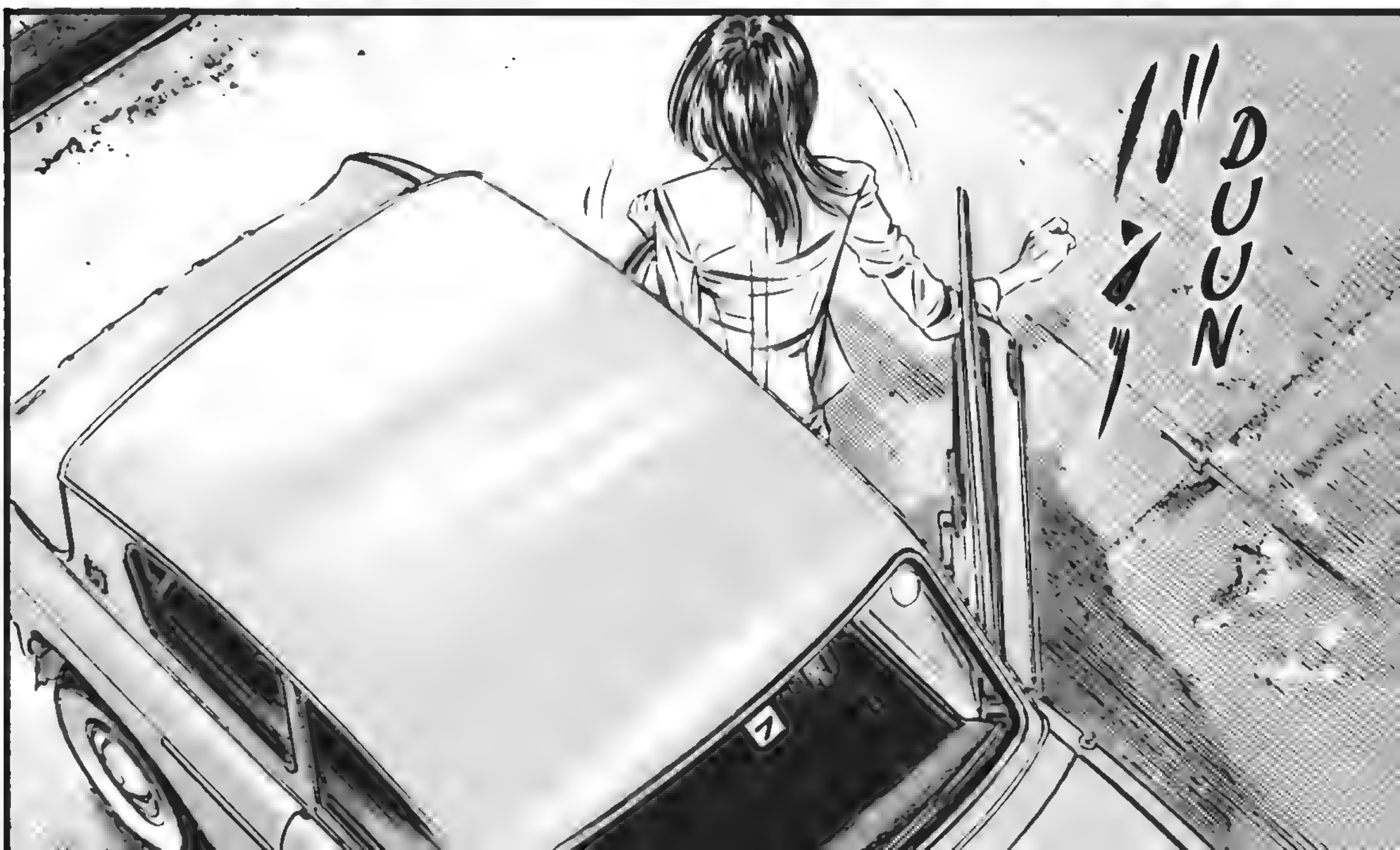


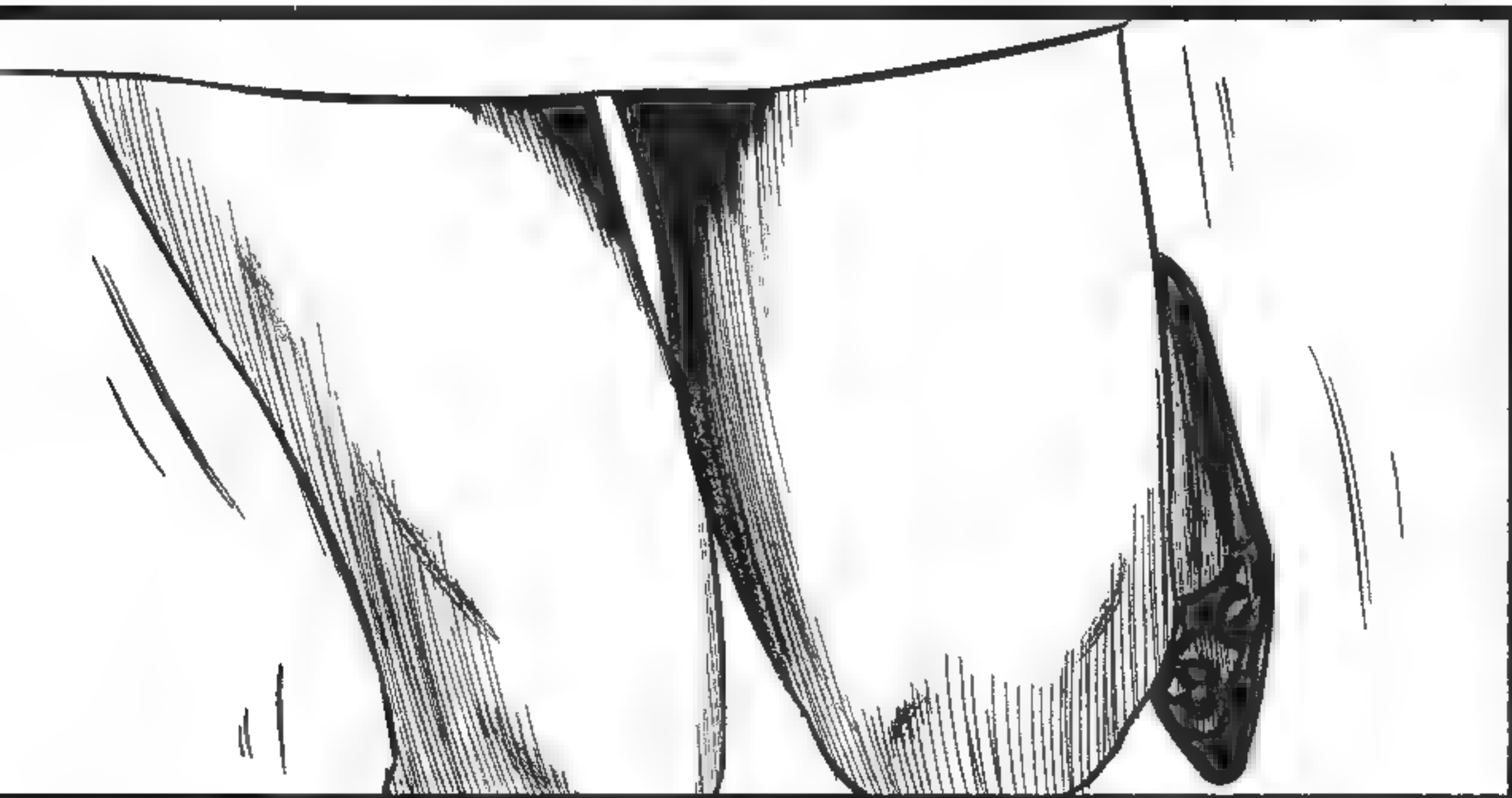
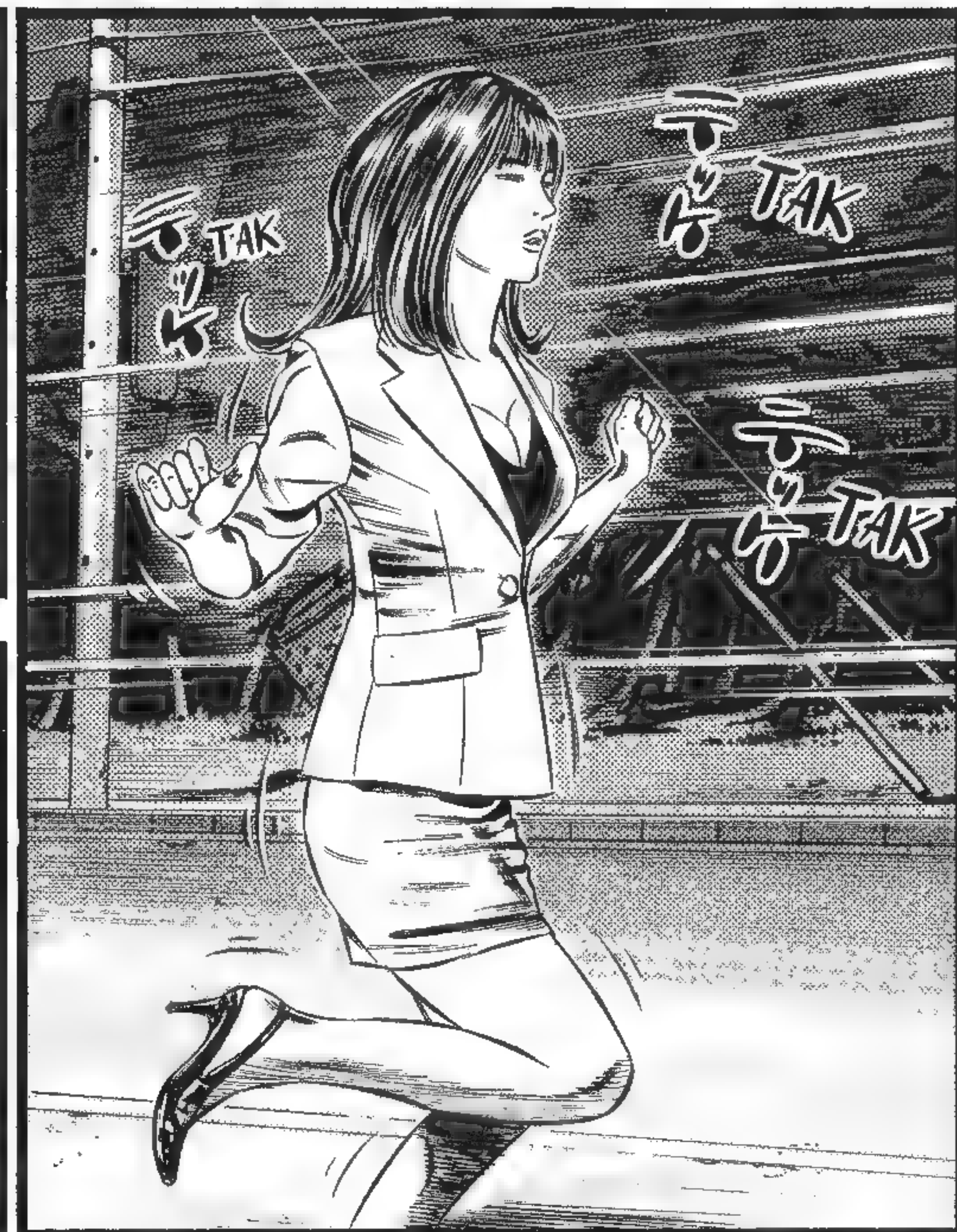
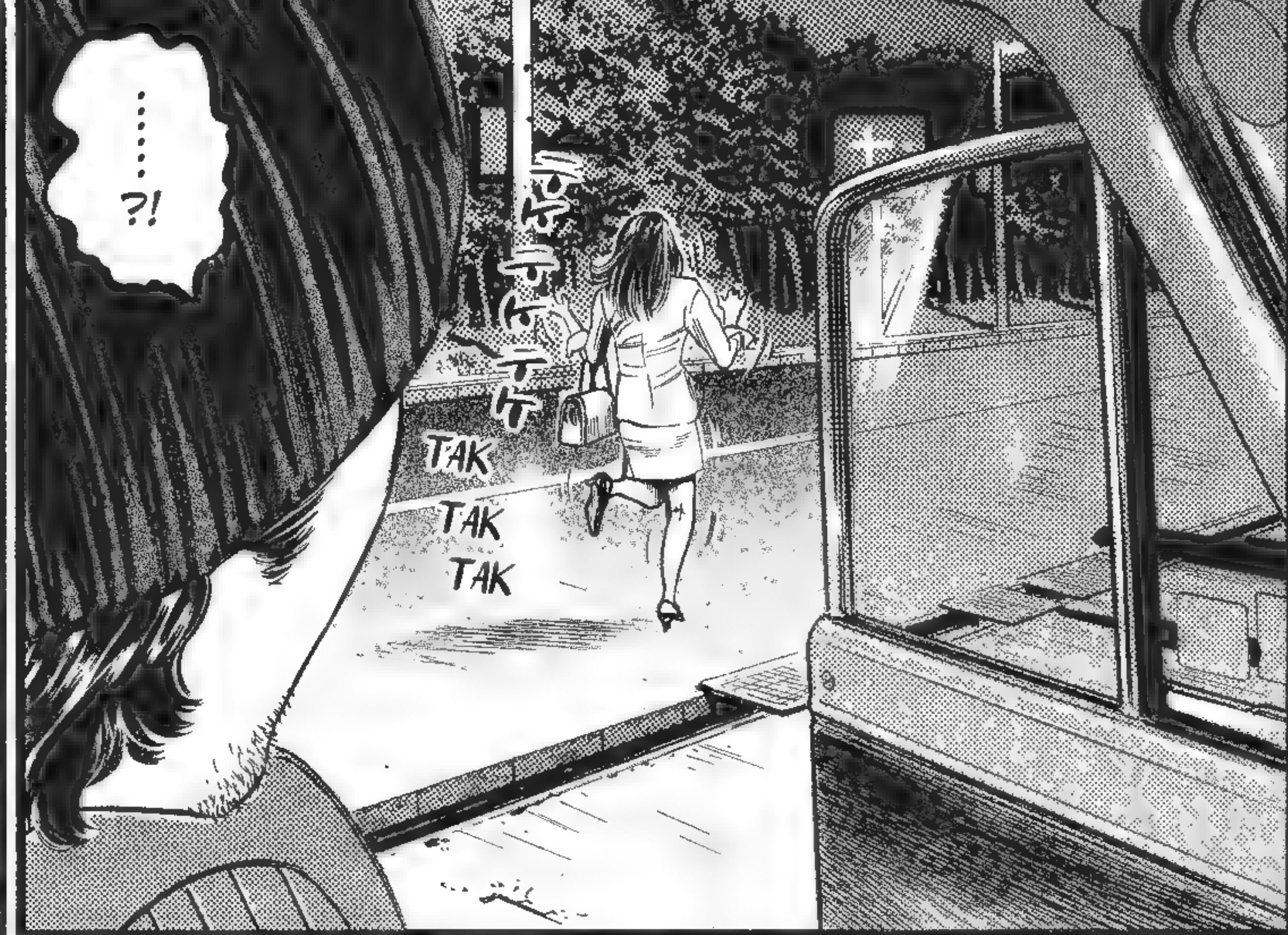
THAT
HIDEOUS
FACE!



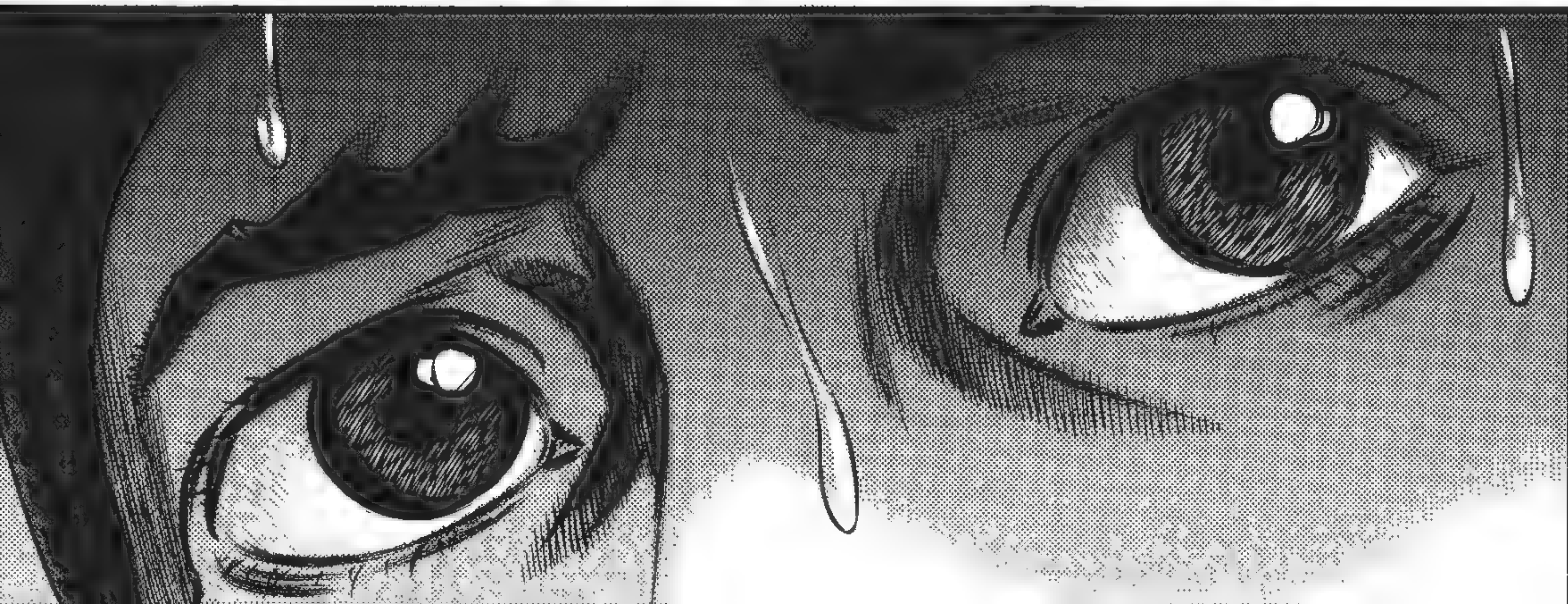
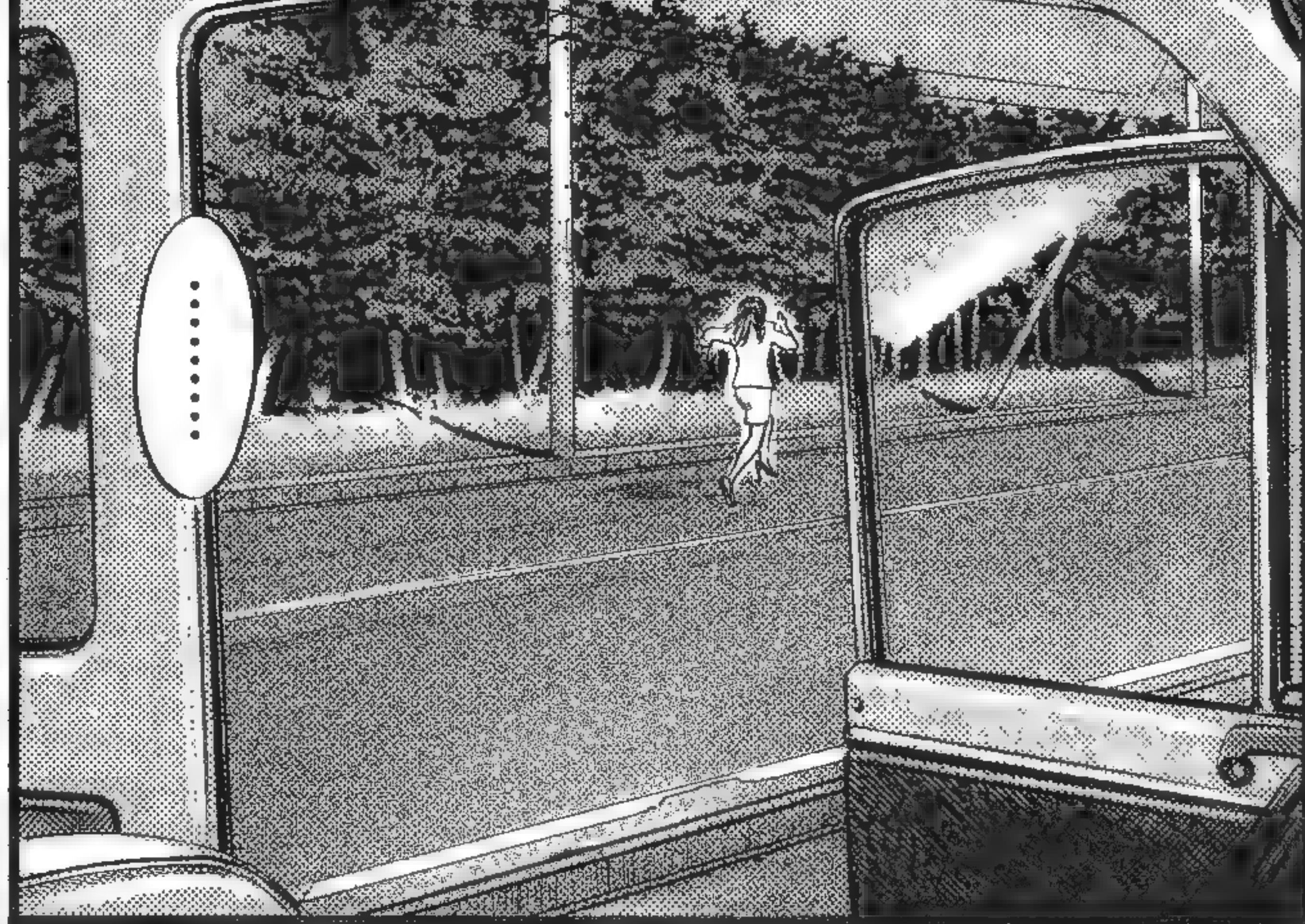
SATOSHI
?!

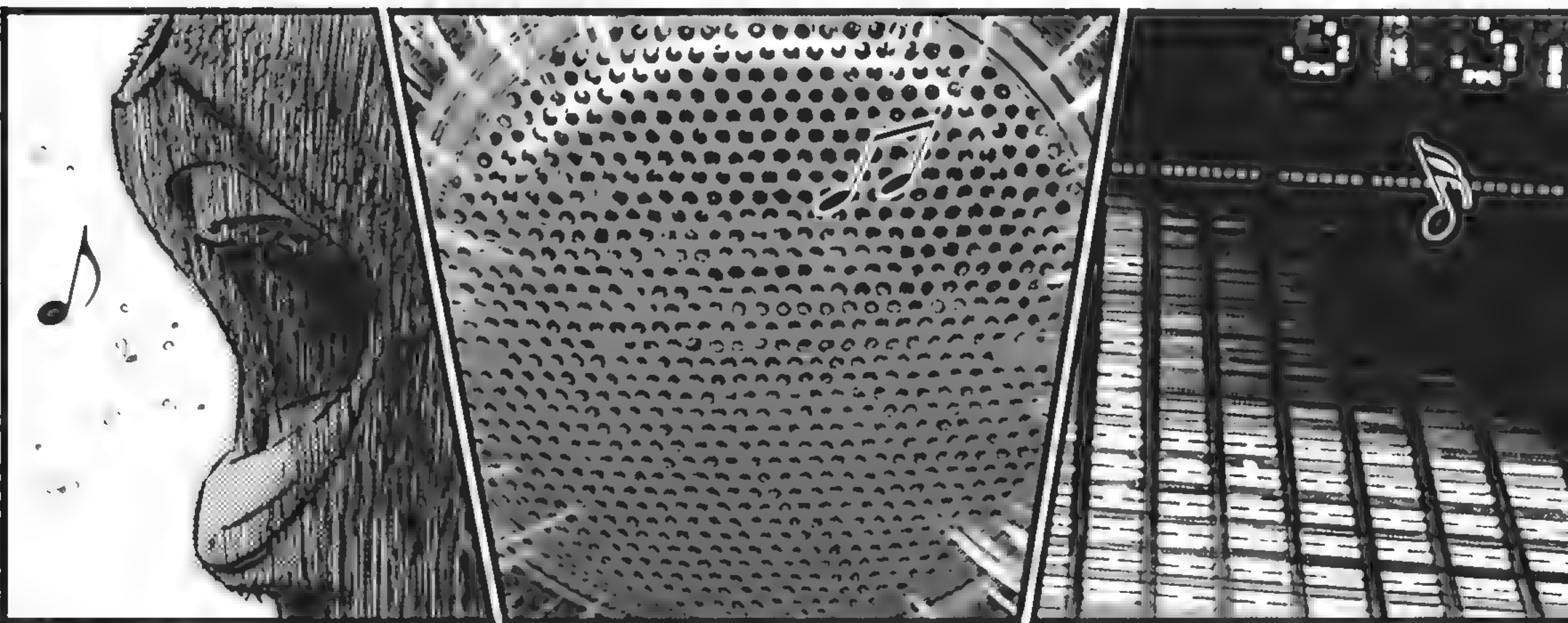
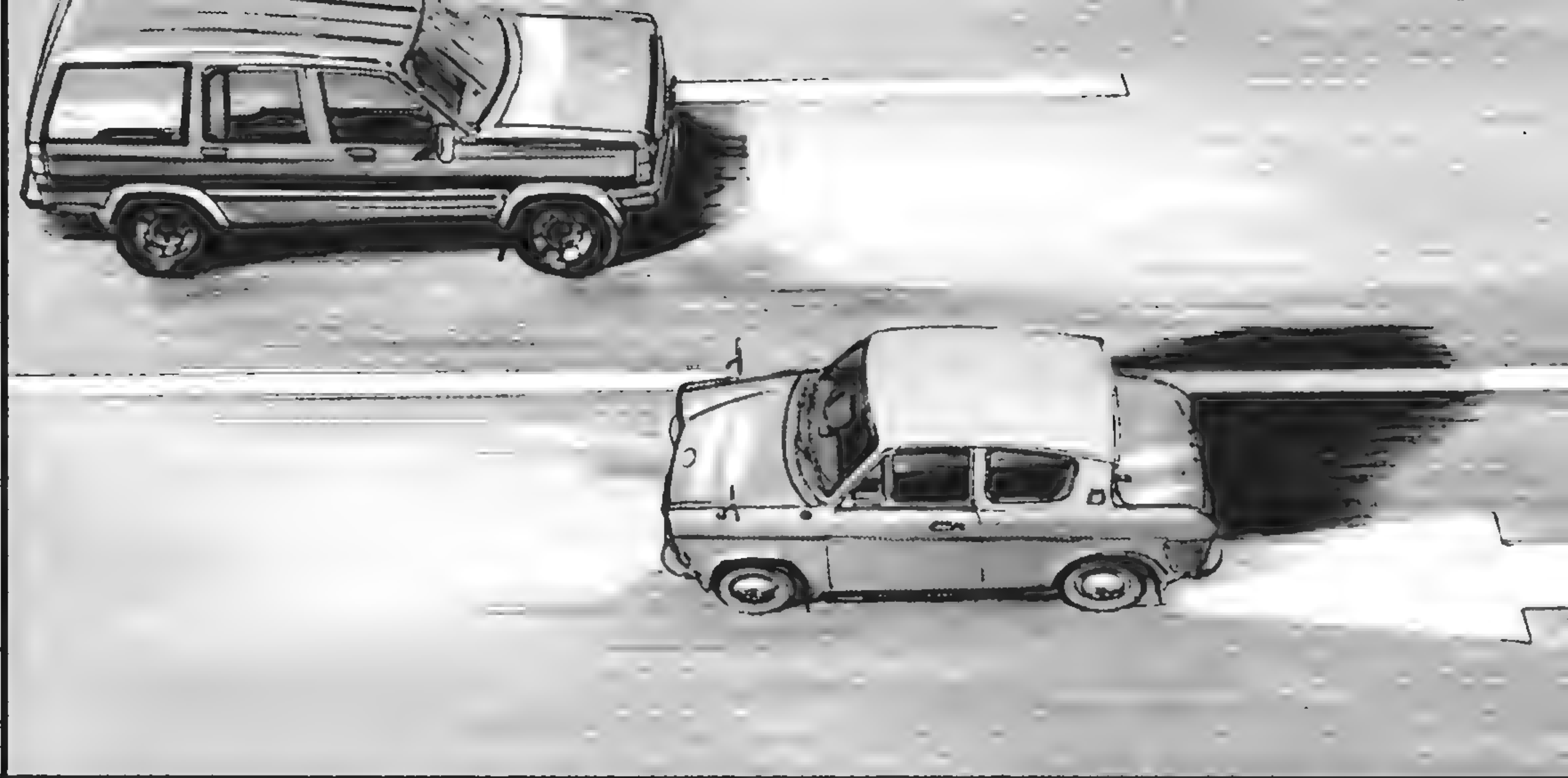
HOW
CAN YOU
SEE...









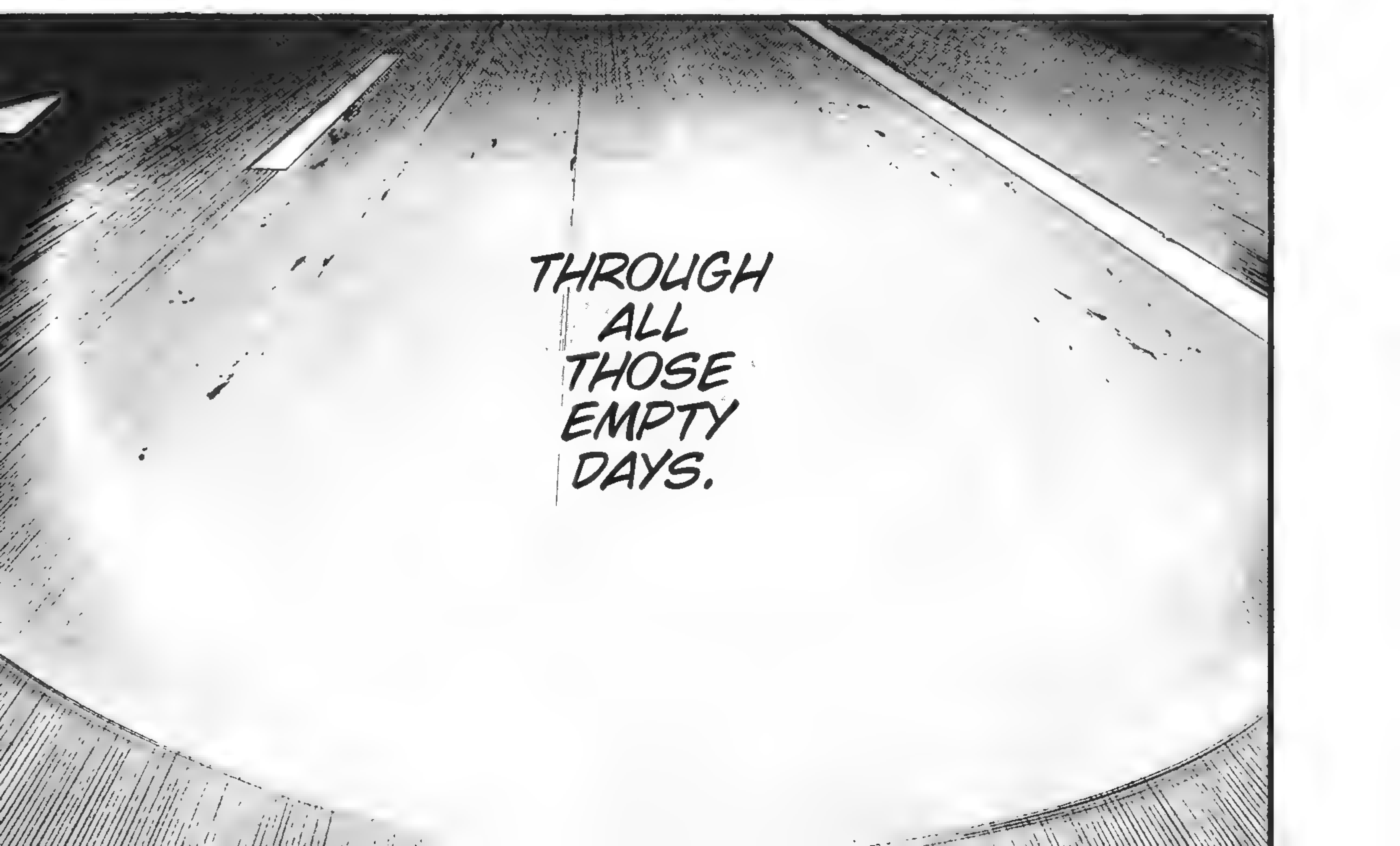




MY SHOES
THE ONLY
THING IN
MY GAZE.

LOOKING
DOWN
TO HIDE
MYSELF...

OF COURSE
I MUST'VE
SEEMED
FACELESS...



THROUGH
ALL
THOSE
EMPTY
DAYS.

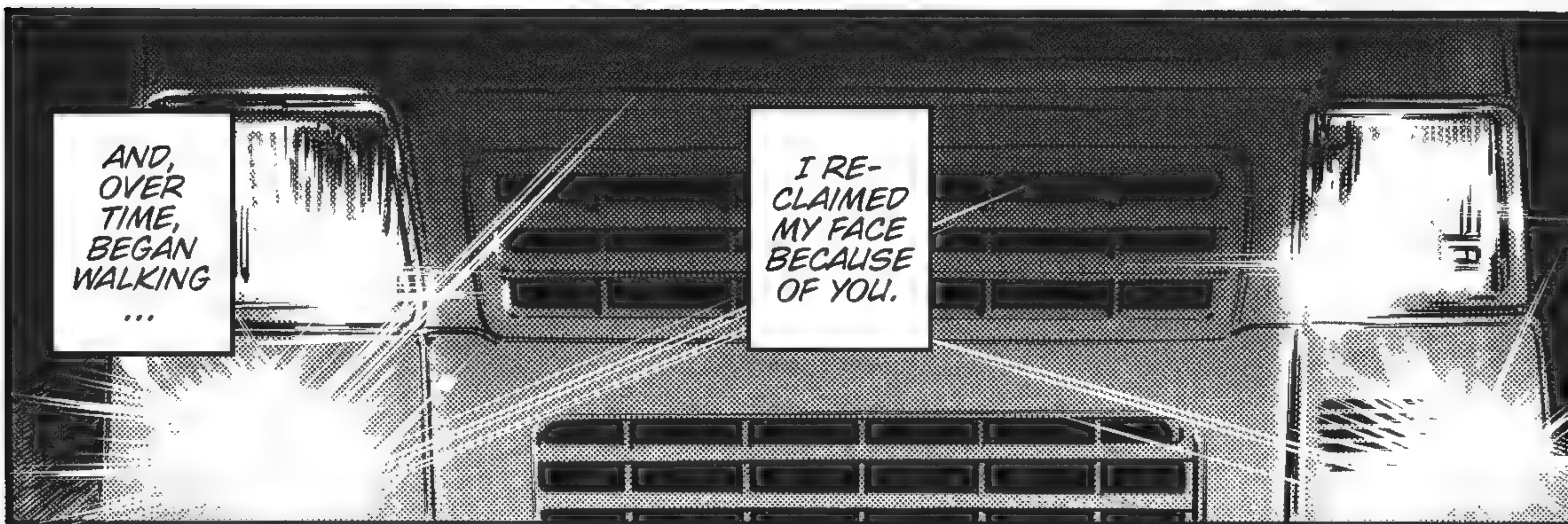


YOU WERE
KIND
ENOUGH
TO LOOK
FOR ME.



WHO
SAW THE
REAL ME
THROUGH
AND
THROUGH.

THERE
WAS ONE
MOMENT,
ONE
SINGLE
SOUL...



AND,
OVER
TIME,
BEGAN
WALKING
...

I RE-
CLAIMED
MY FACE
BECAUSE
OF YOU.



WITH
MY EYES
SET
FORWARD
AND
TRUE.



I...

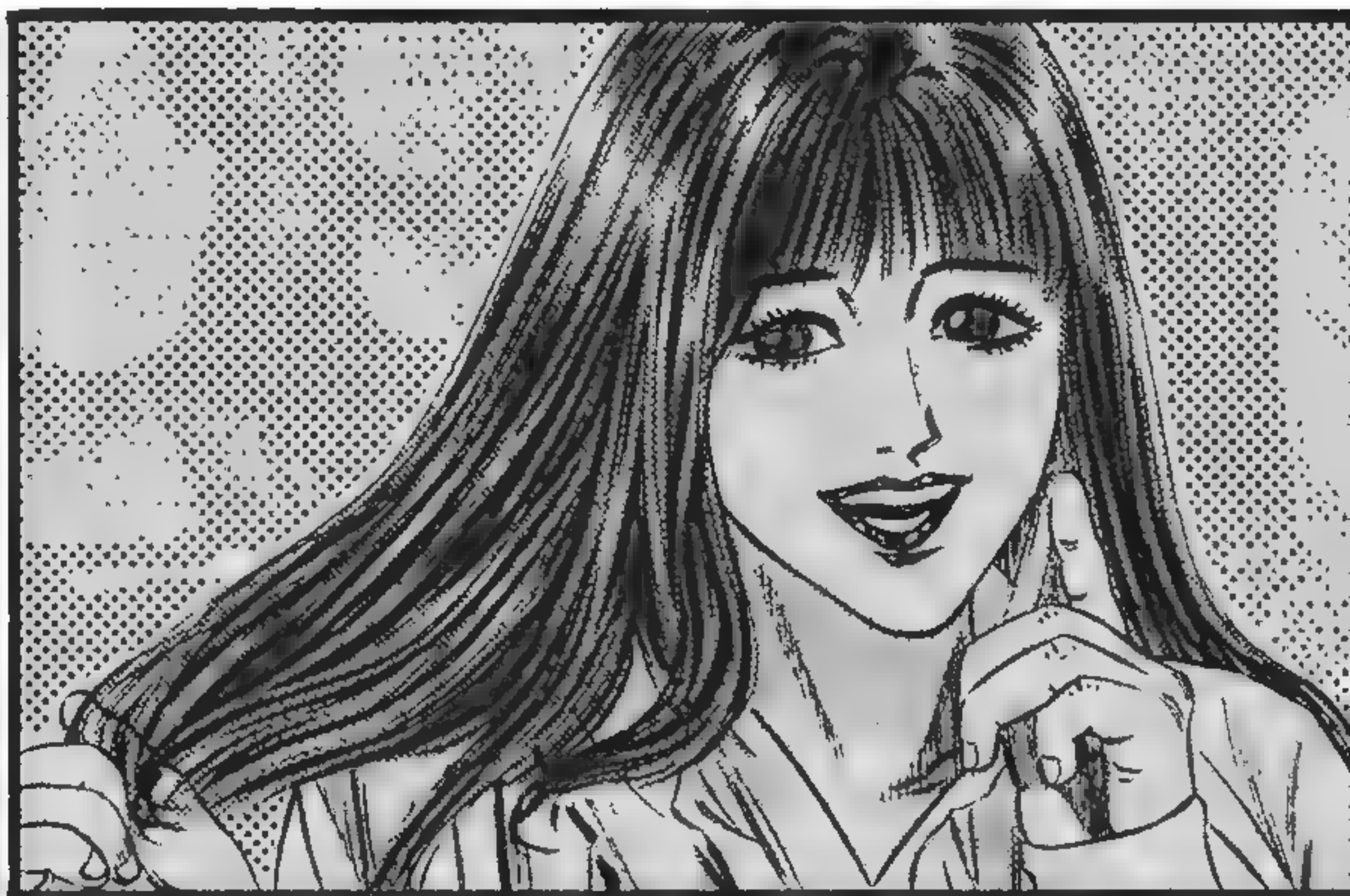
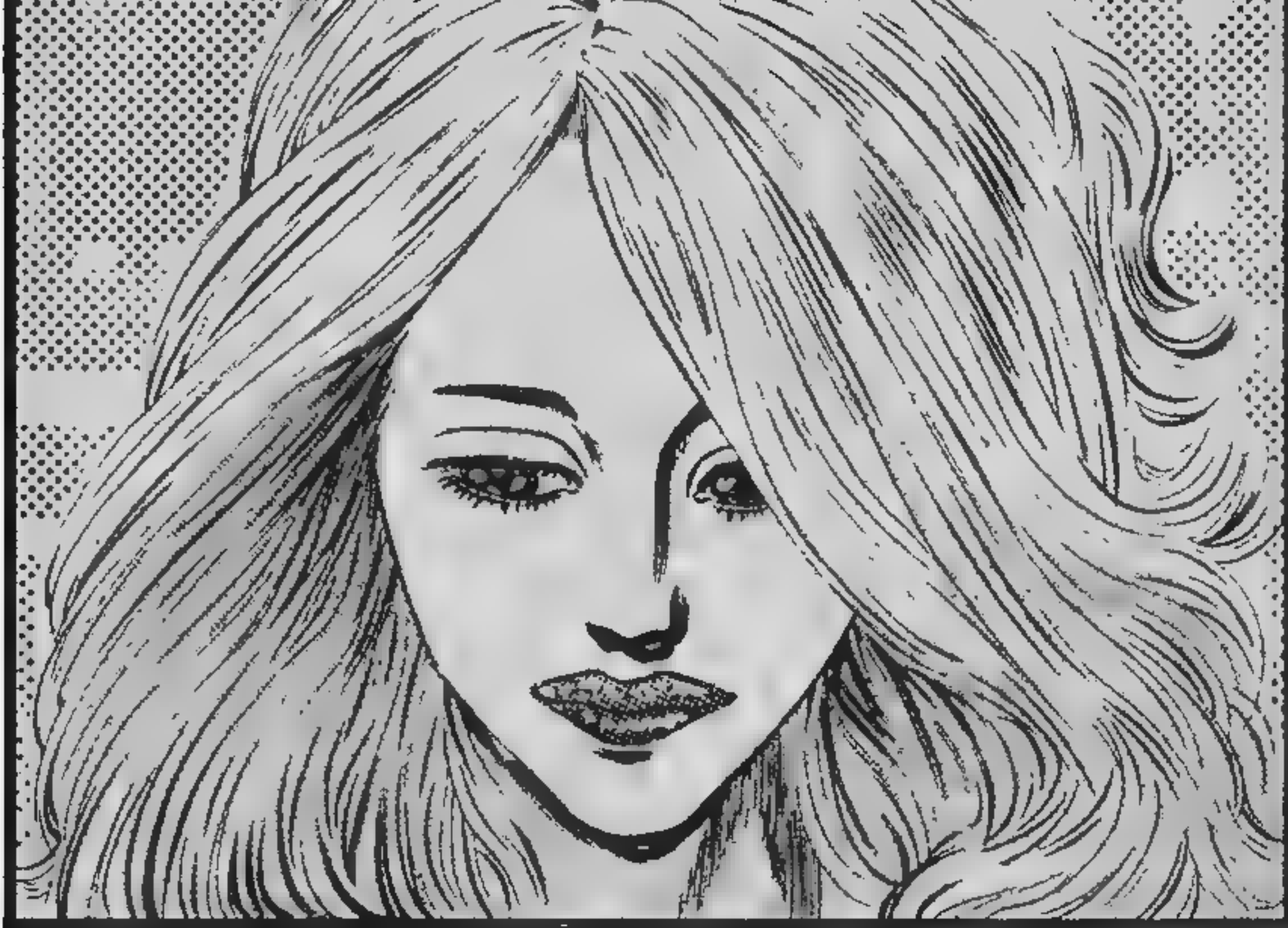


THE
SECOND
I STARTED
LOOKING
FORWARD
...

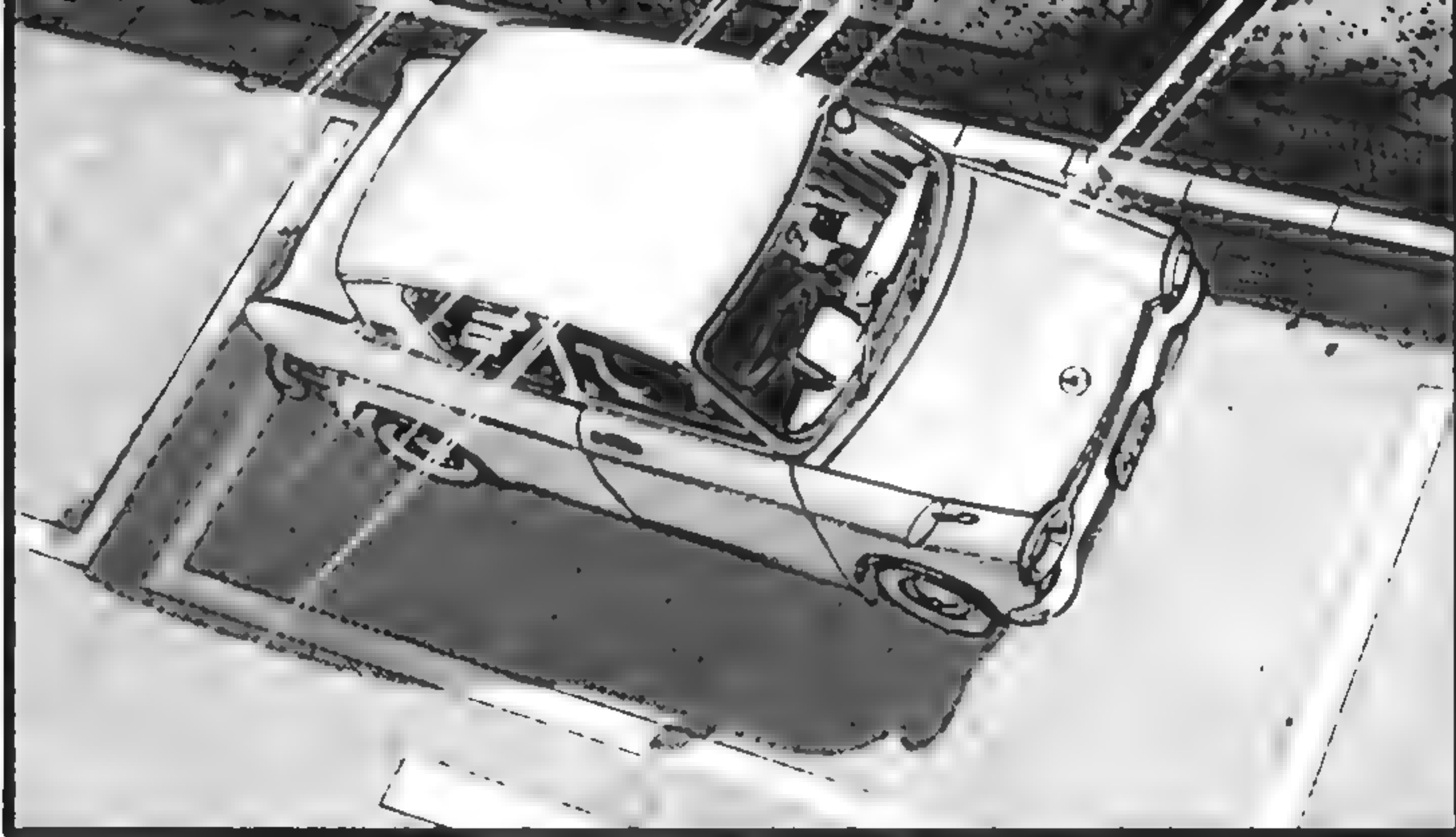


LOOKING
FORWARD
...



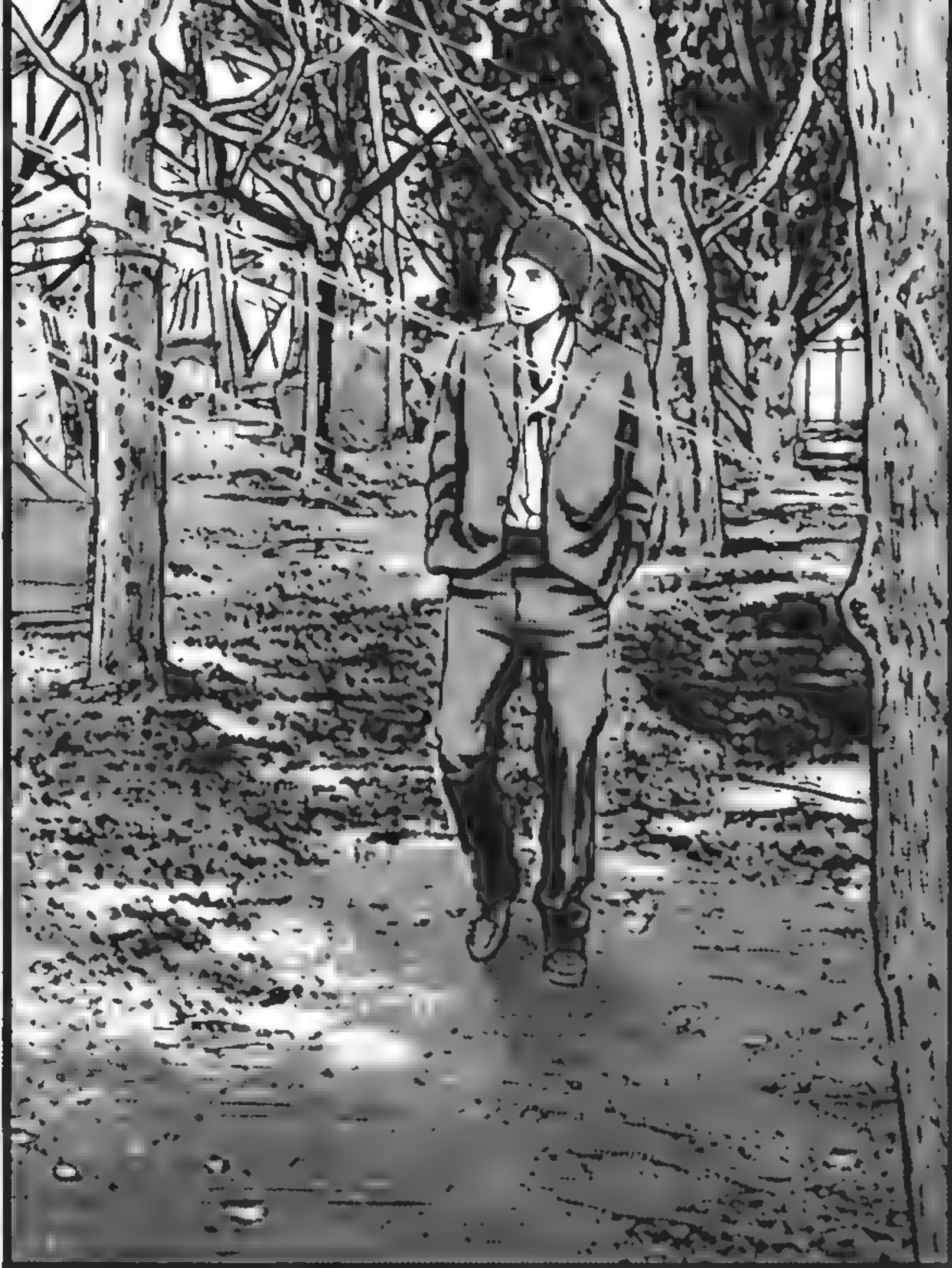
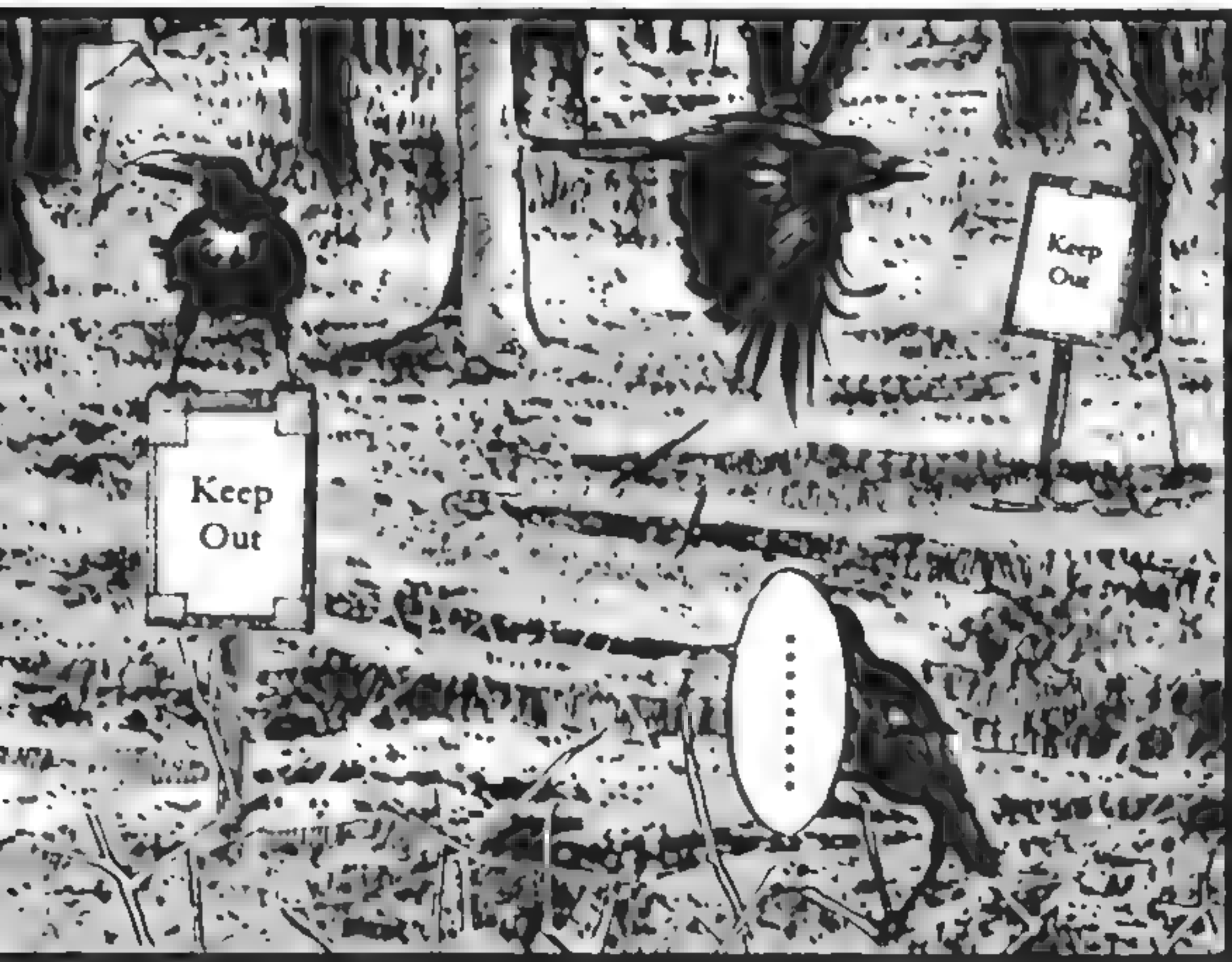




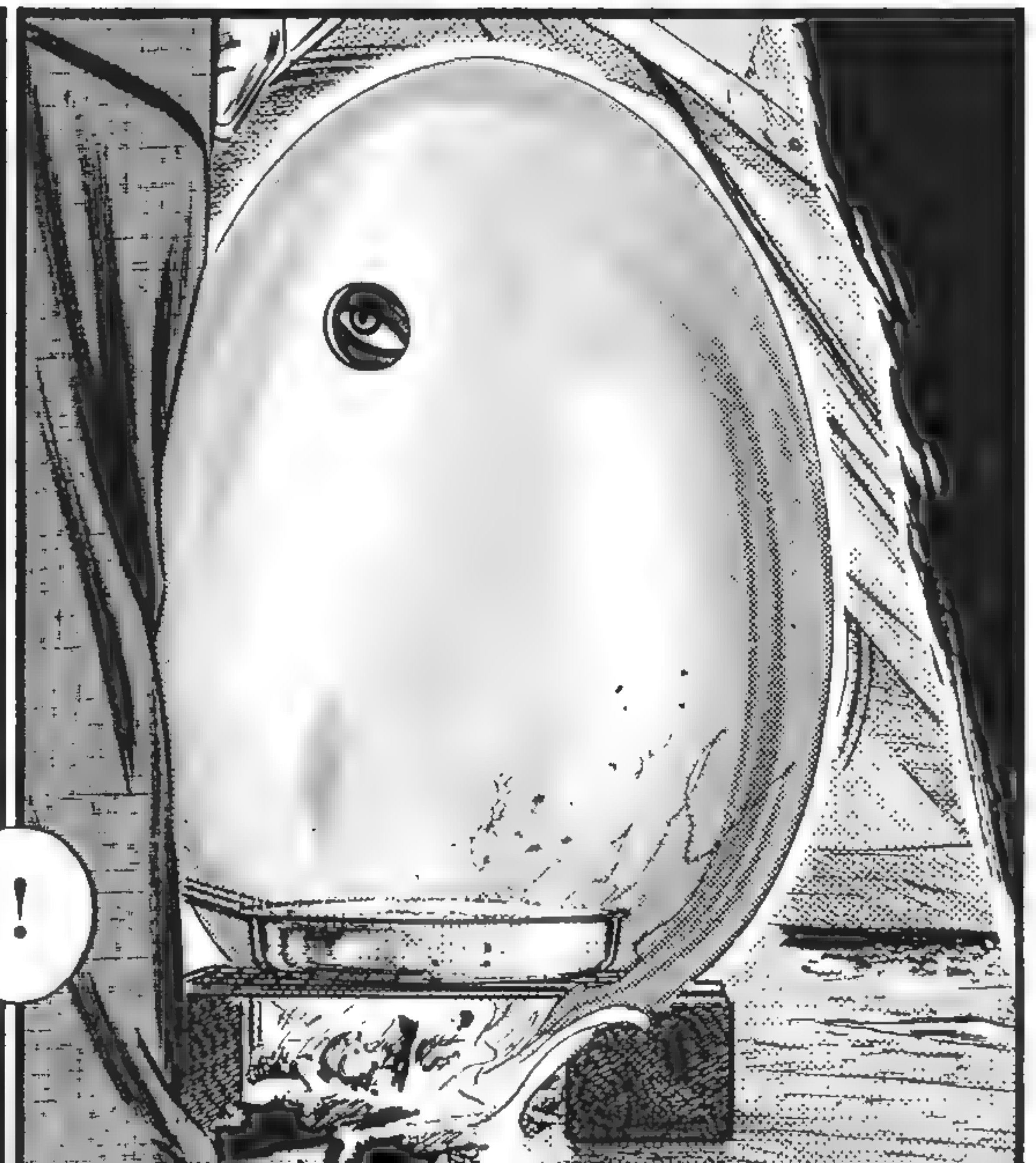


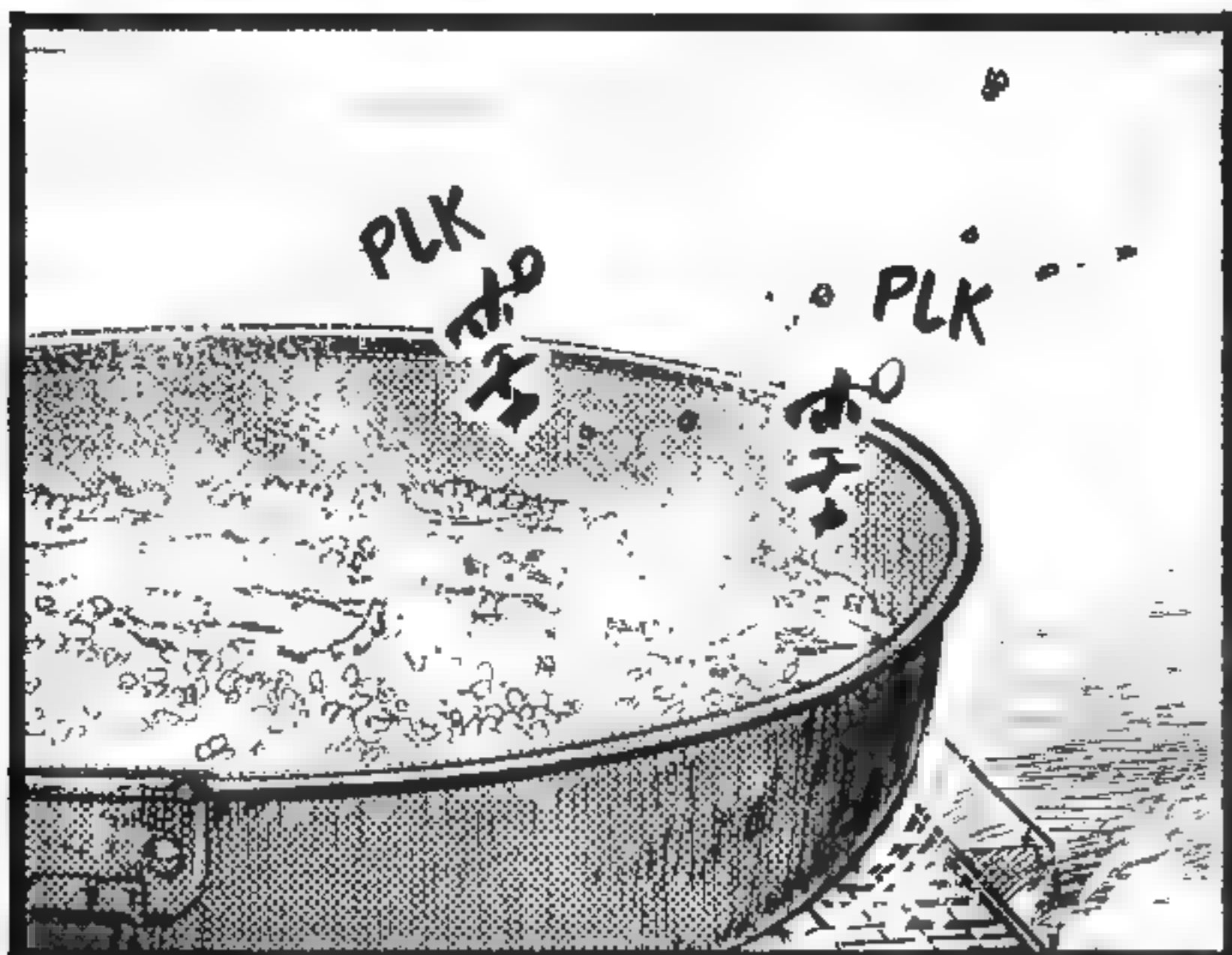
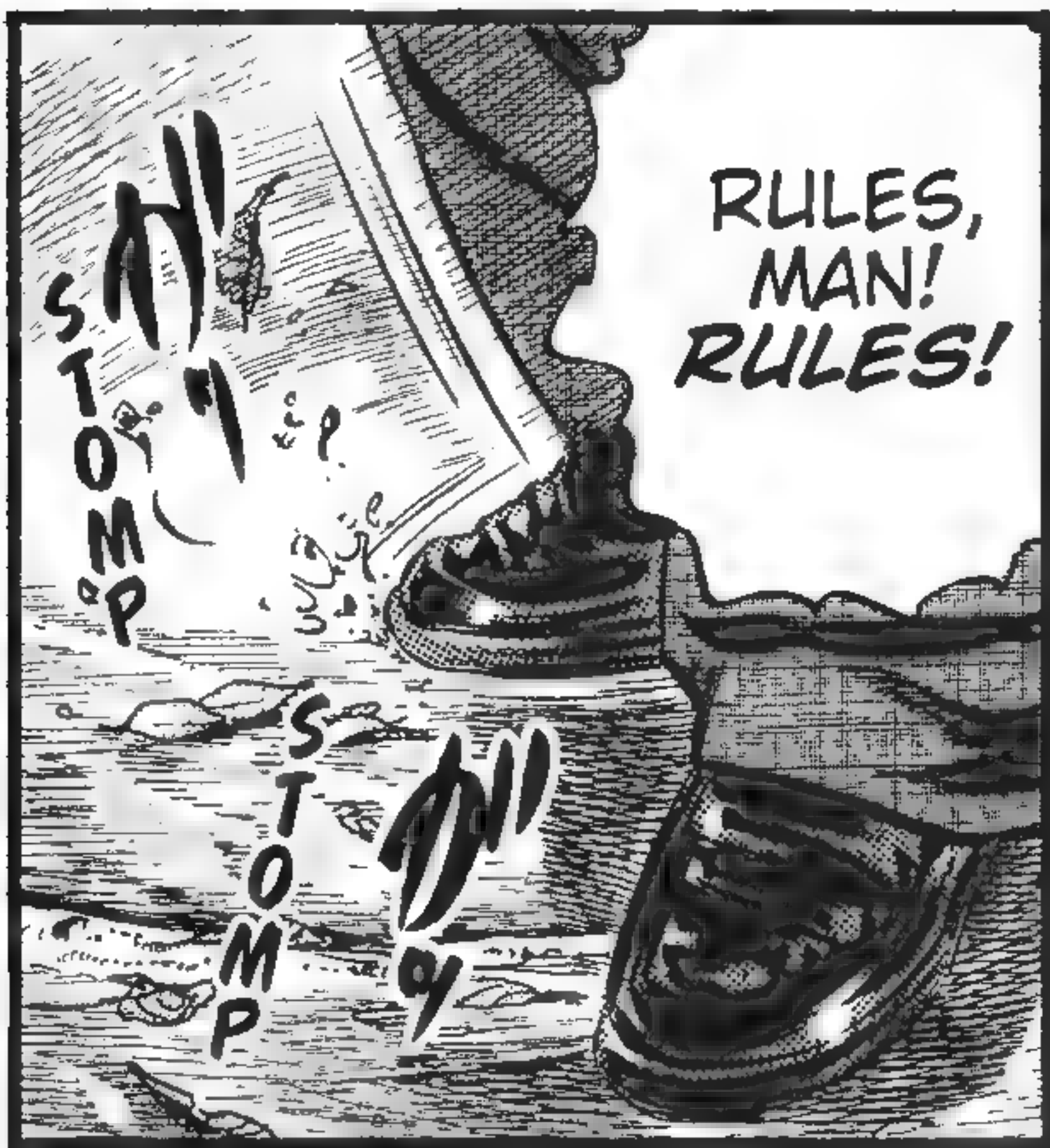
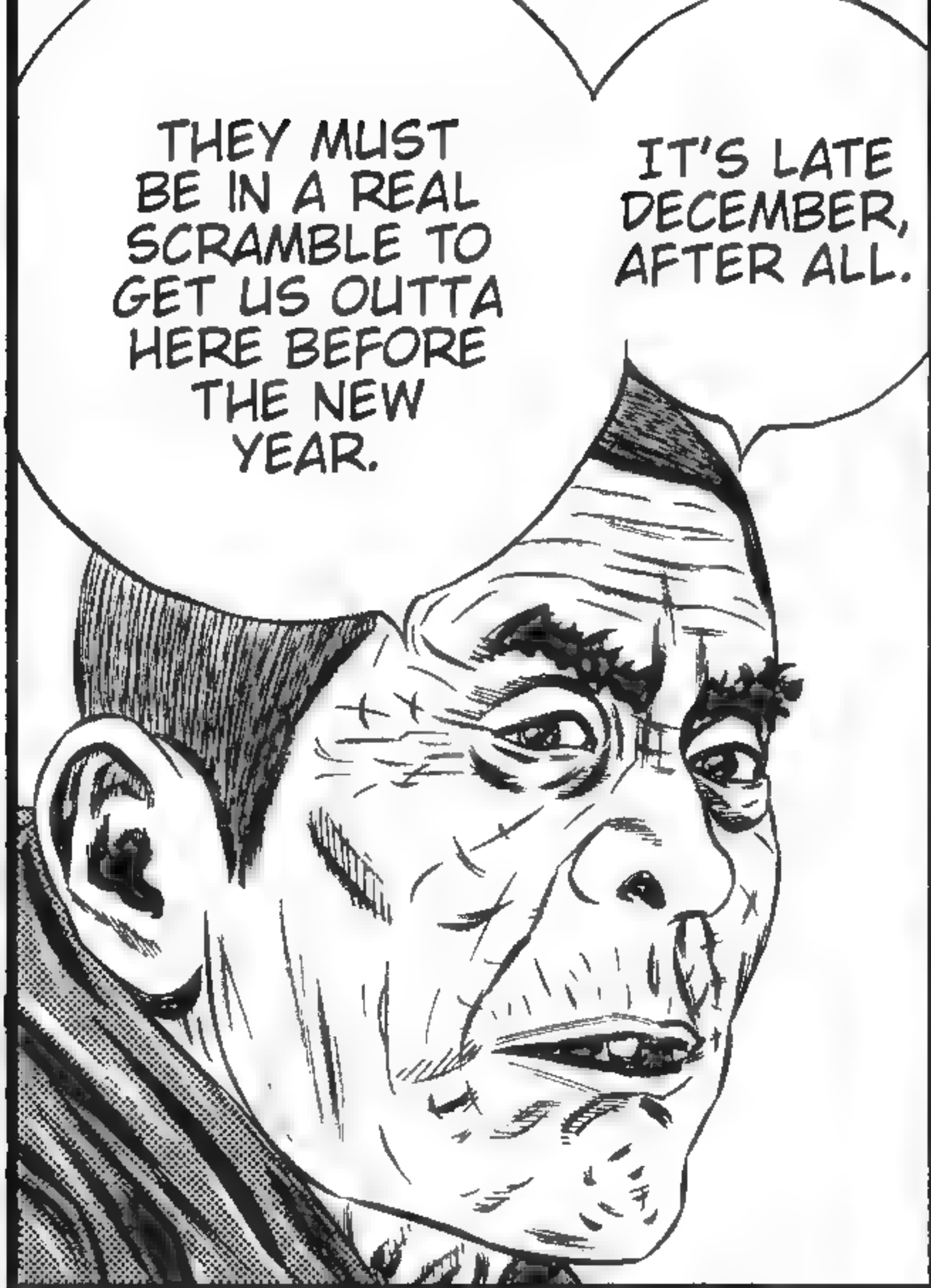
Nameplate Tanaka-san

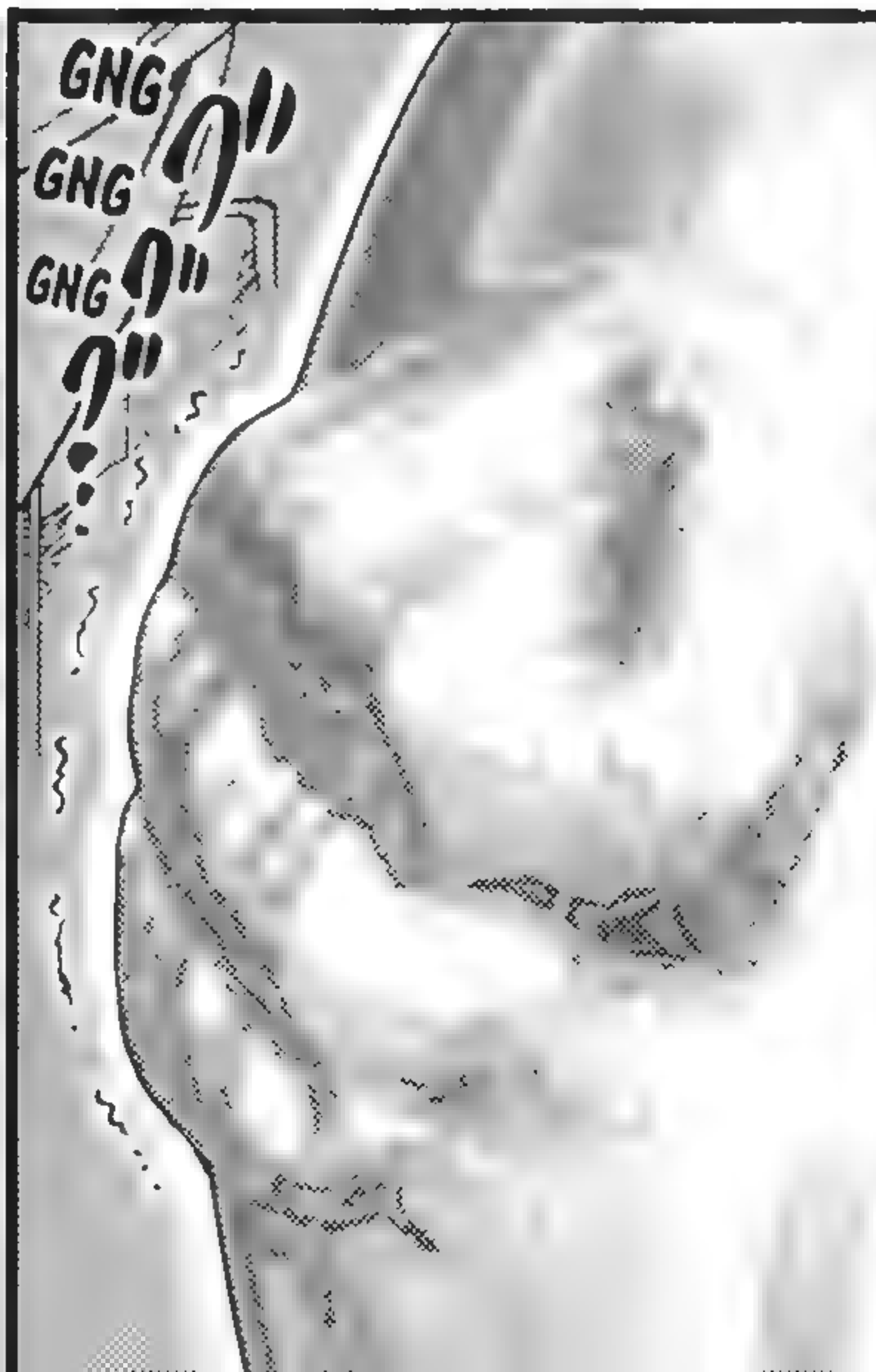


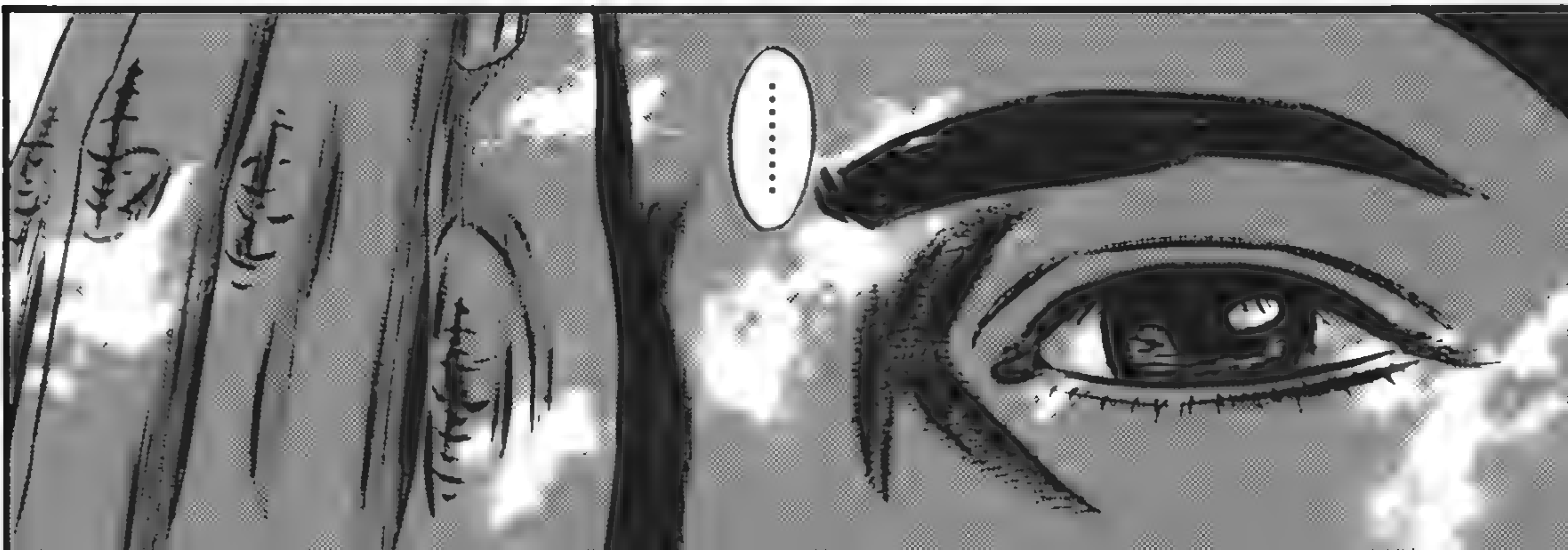
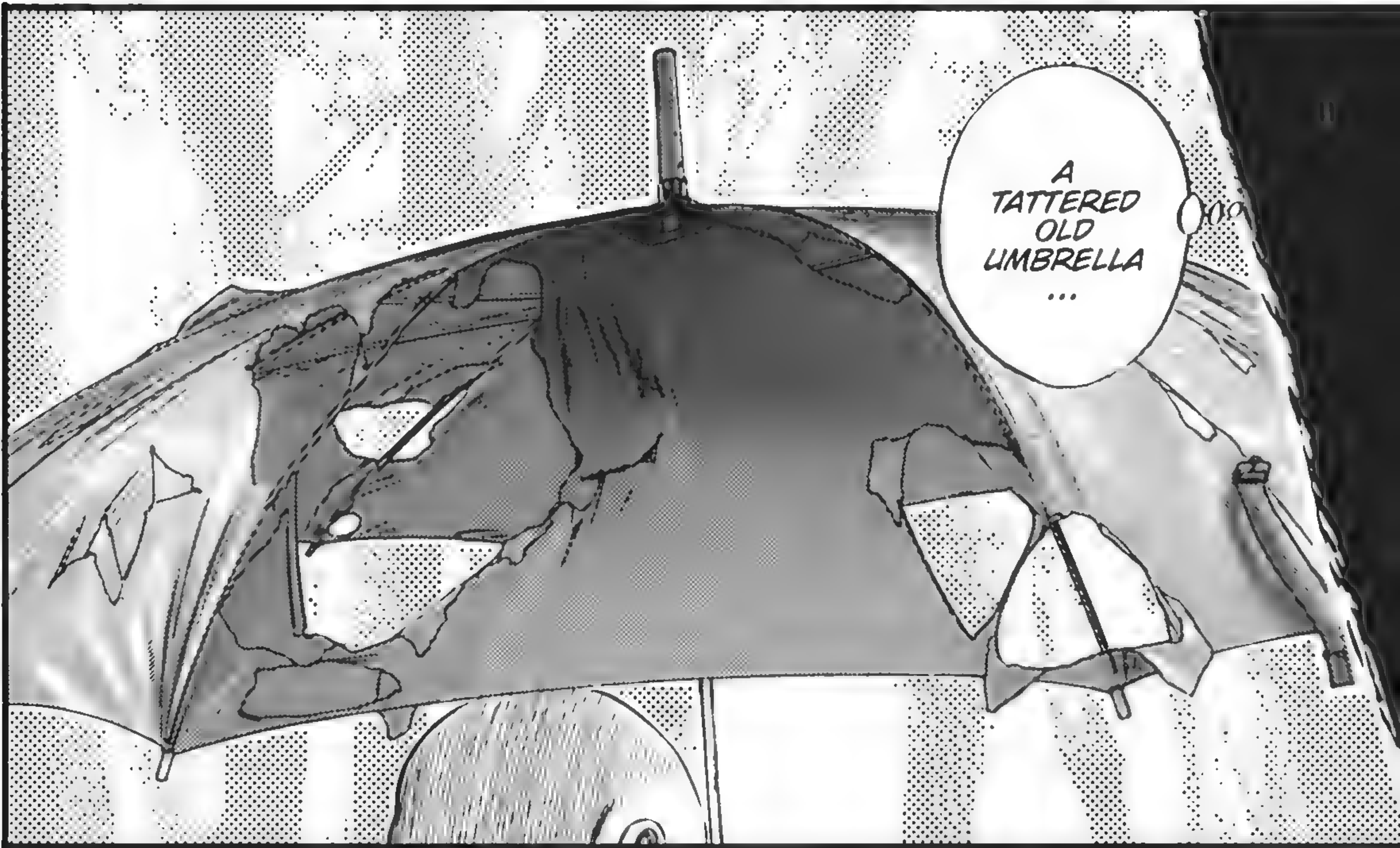
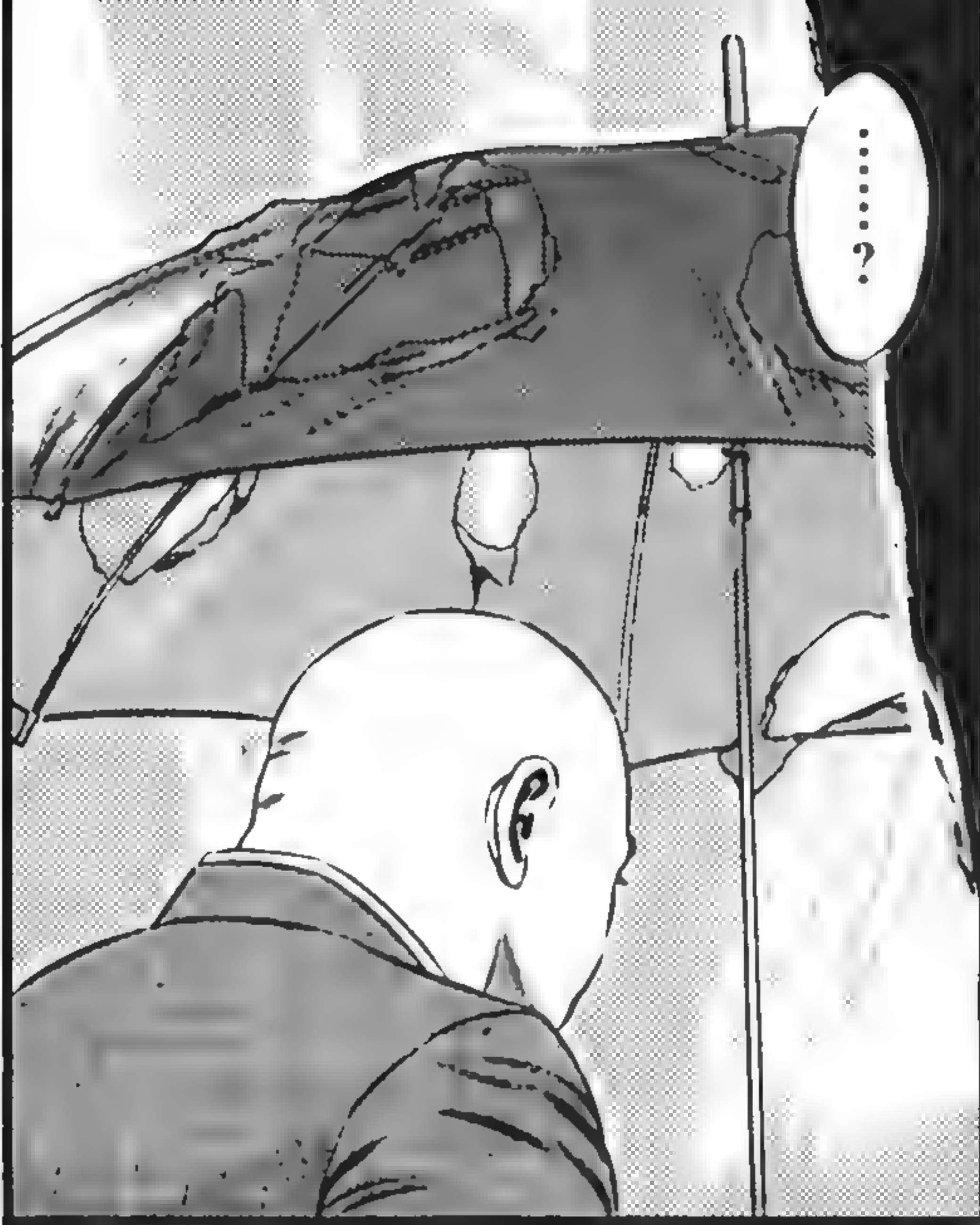


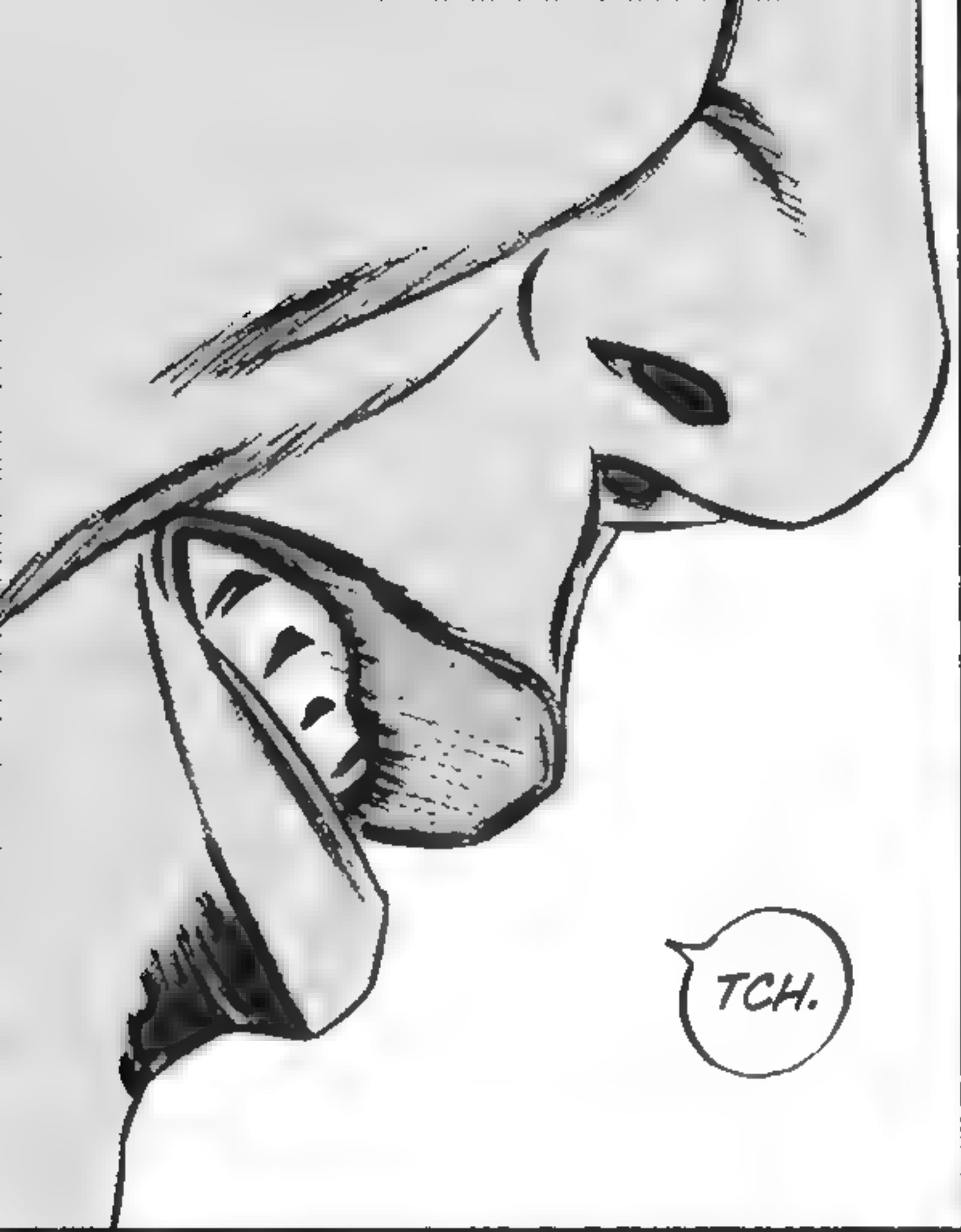












TCH.



GO ON,
GET! GET
OUTTA
HERE!



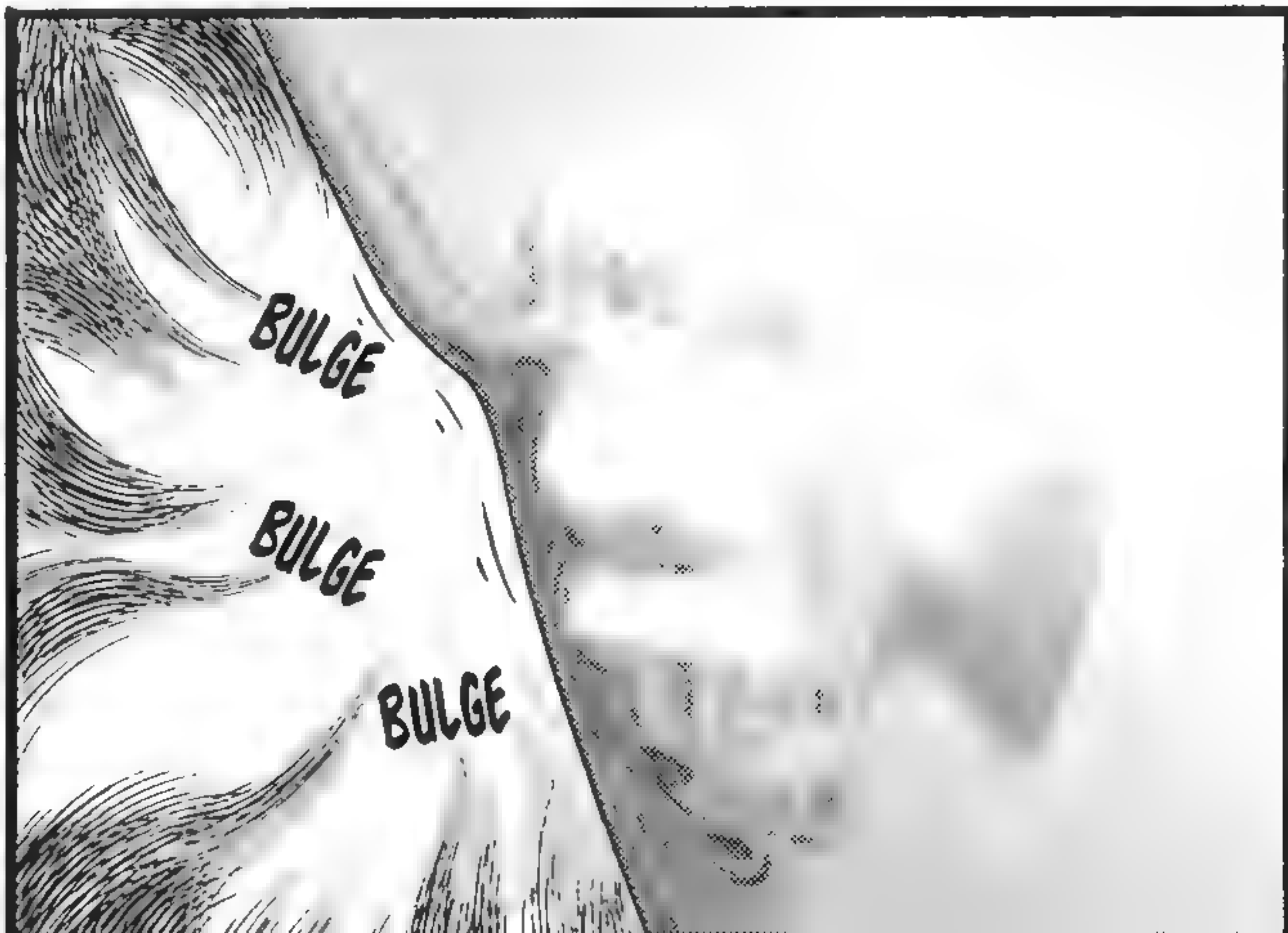
COURSE
...



I SUPPOSE
YOU'RE ONLY
HANGING AROUND
HERE IN THE FIRST
PLACE 'CAUSE NO
ONE ELSE WANTS
YOU.



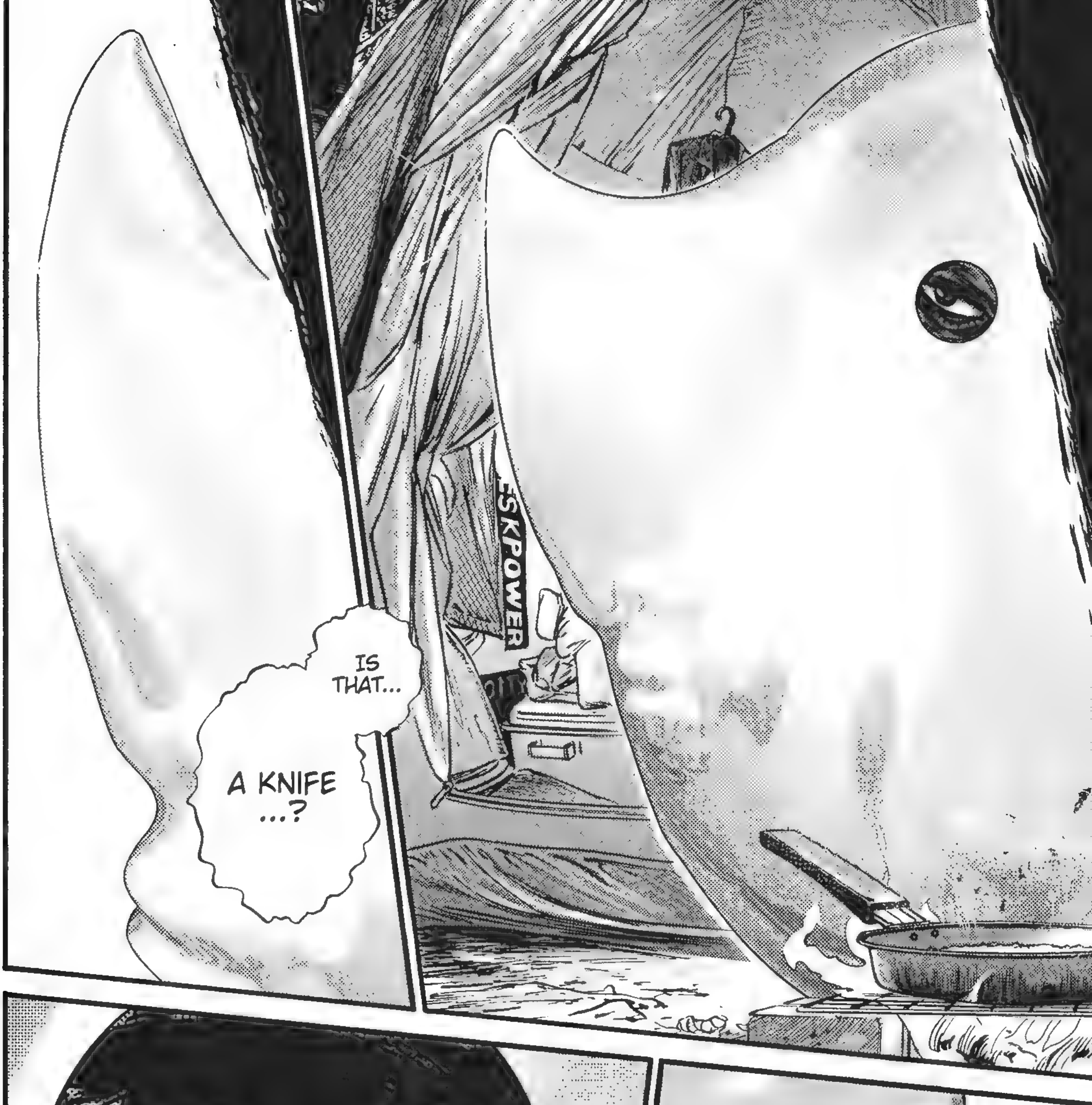
WHOA
...



BULGE

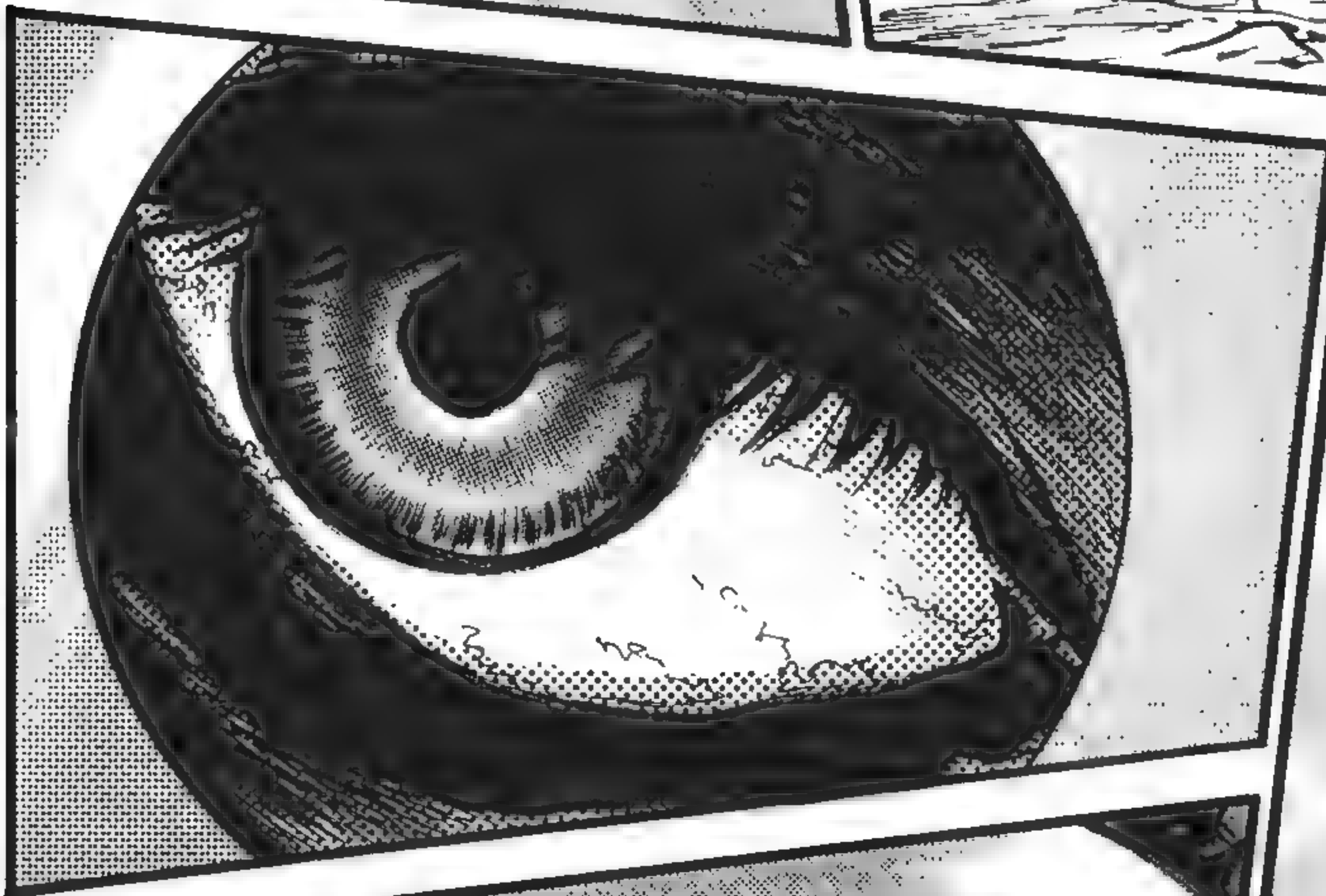
BULGE

BULGE



IS
THAT...

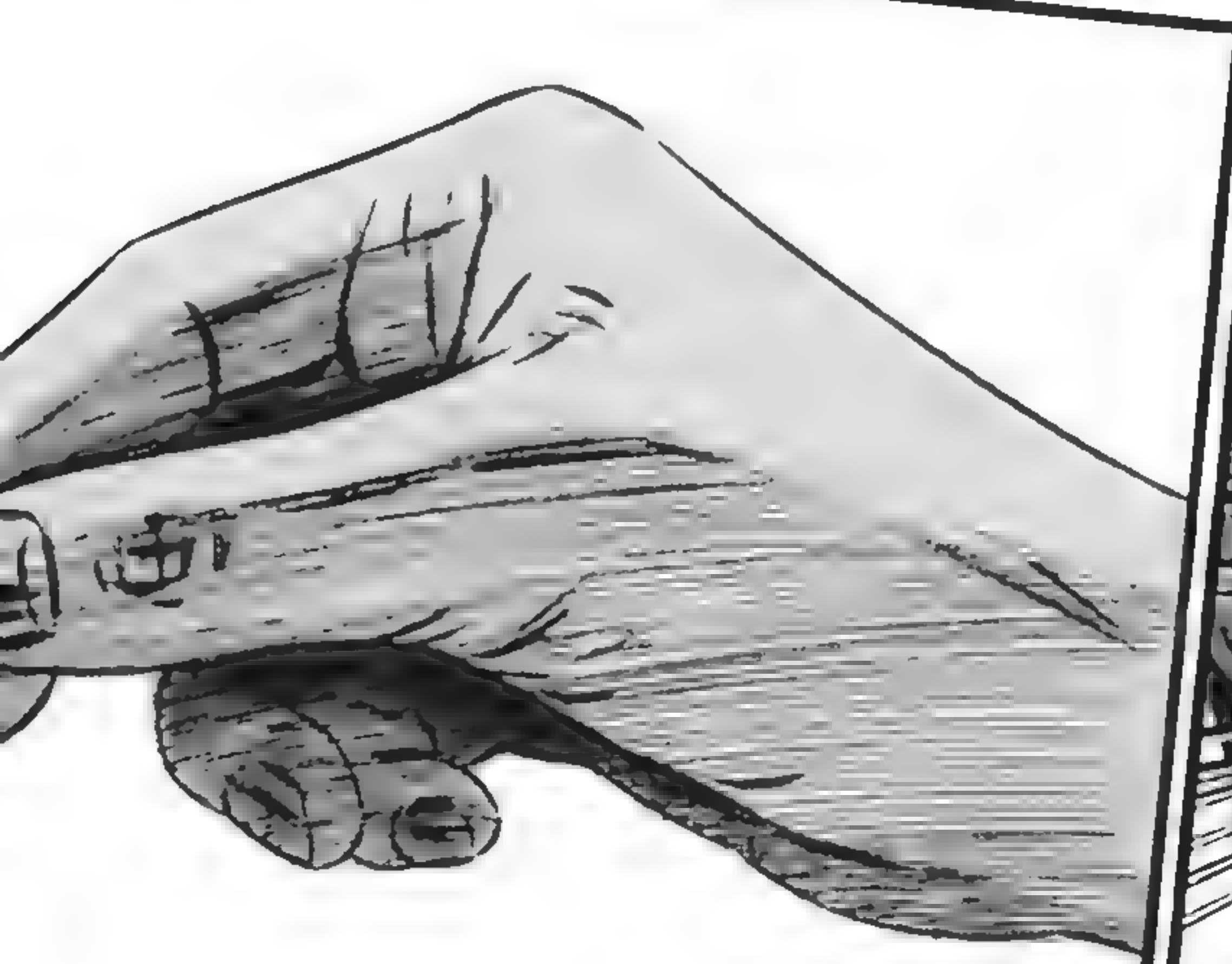
A KNIFE
...?



UH-OH.



HEH
HEH
...



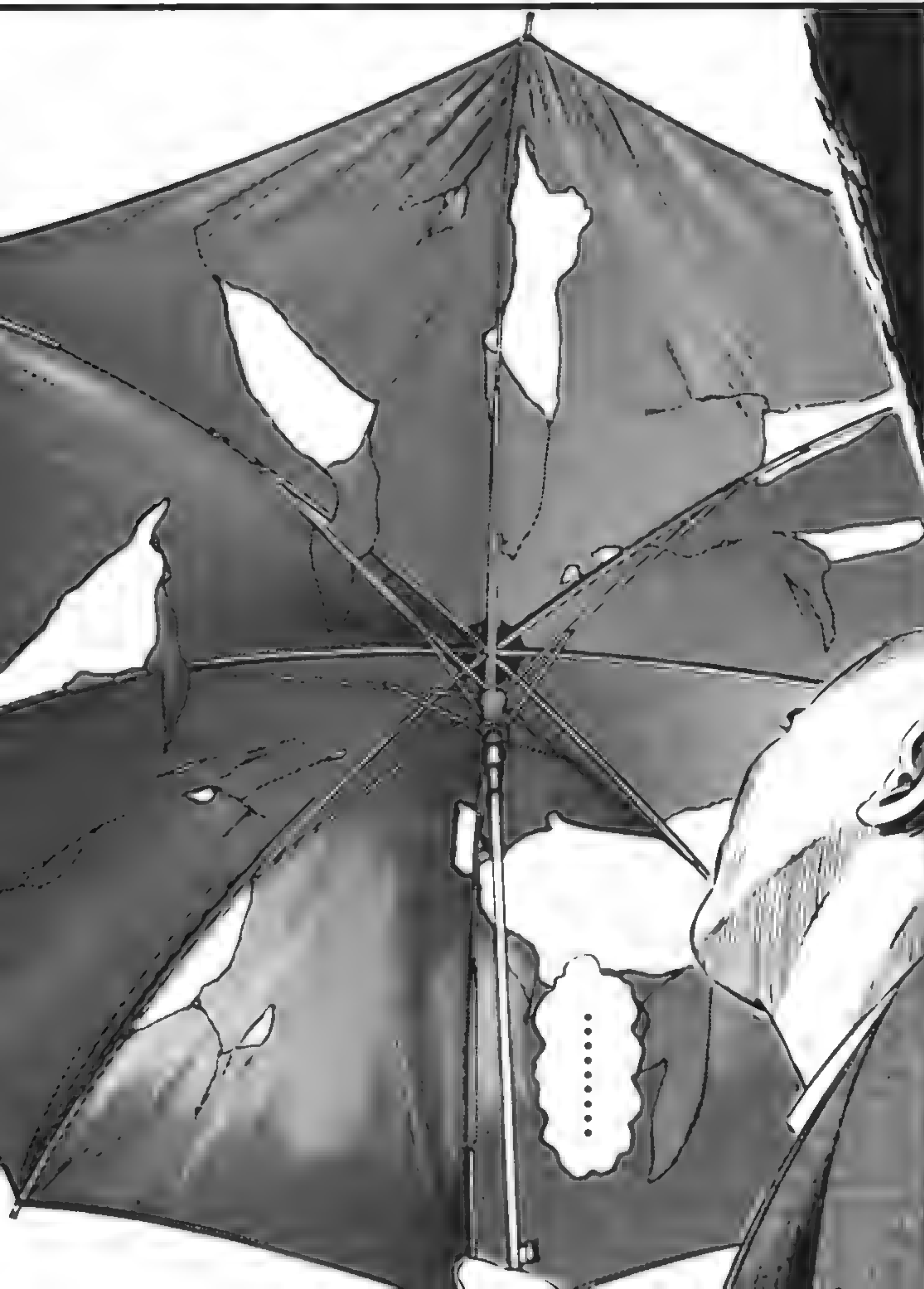




WHEN
THE HELL
DID THAT
HAPPEN?!

WH...

GOD
DAMN IT!



WHOLE
FLOCKS OF
INJURED CROWS
COME HERE TO
HEAL.

GOTTA BE
CAREFUL
OUT HERE.



THEIR
SHIT FALLS
DOWN LIKE
RAIN.



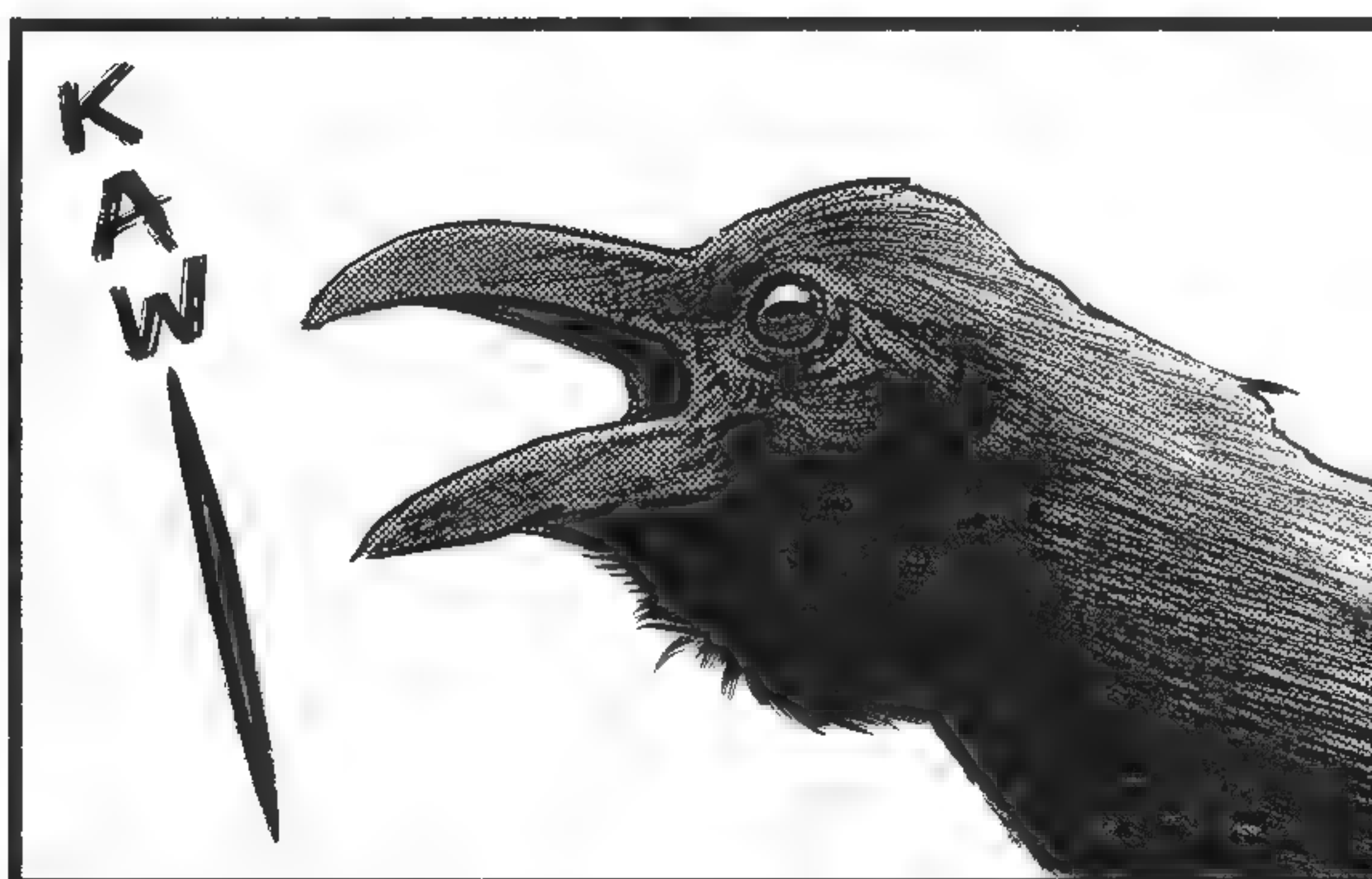
YOU'D
BETTER
HEAD HOME
BEFORE
YOUR SUIT'S
RUINED.

YOU CAN'T
STAY CLEAN WITH
A RAGGEDY OLD
THING LIKE THAT,
CAN YOU?



DAMN
IT....!

WAUGH
!!



KAW



SO PACK
UP YOUR
SHIT AND
GET OUT!



RULES
ARE
RULES!



THIS ISN'T
THE LAST
YOU'LL HEAR
FROM ME!!

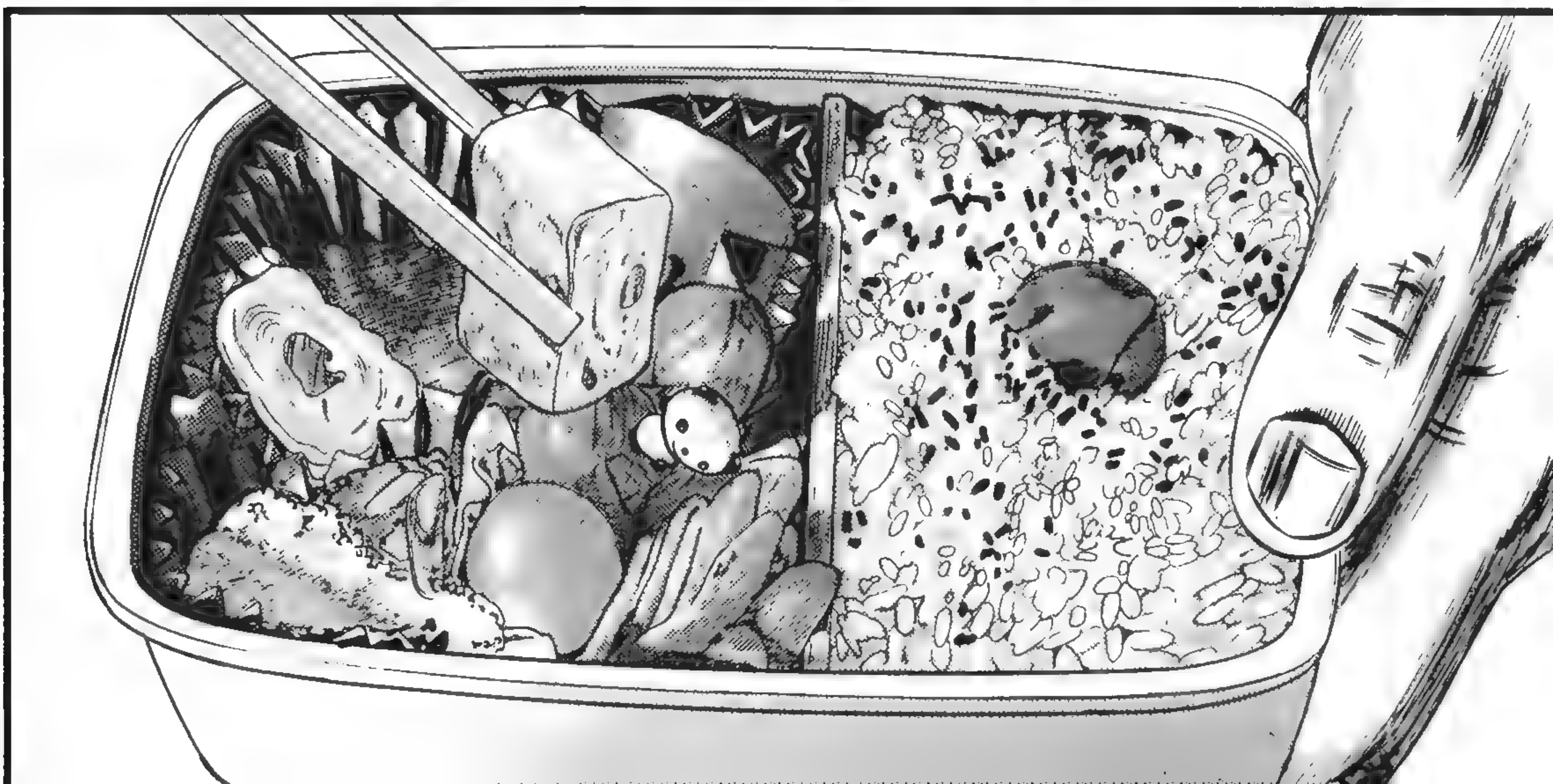
KNCH

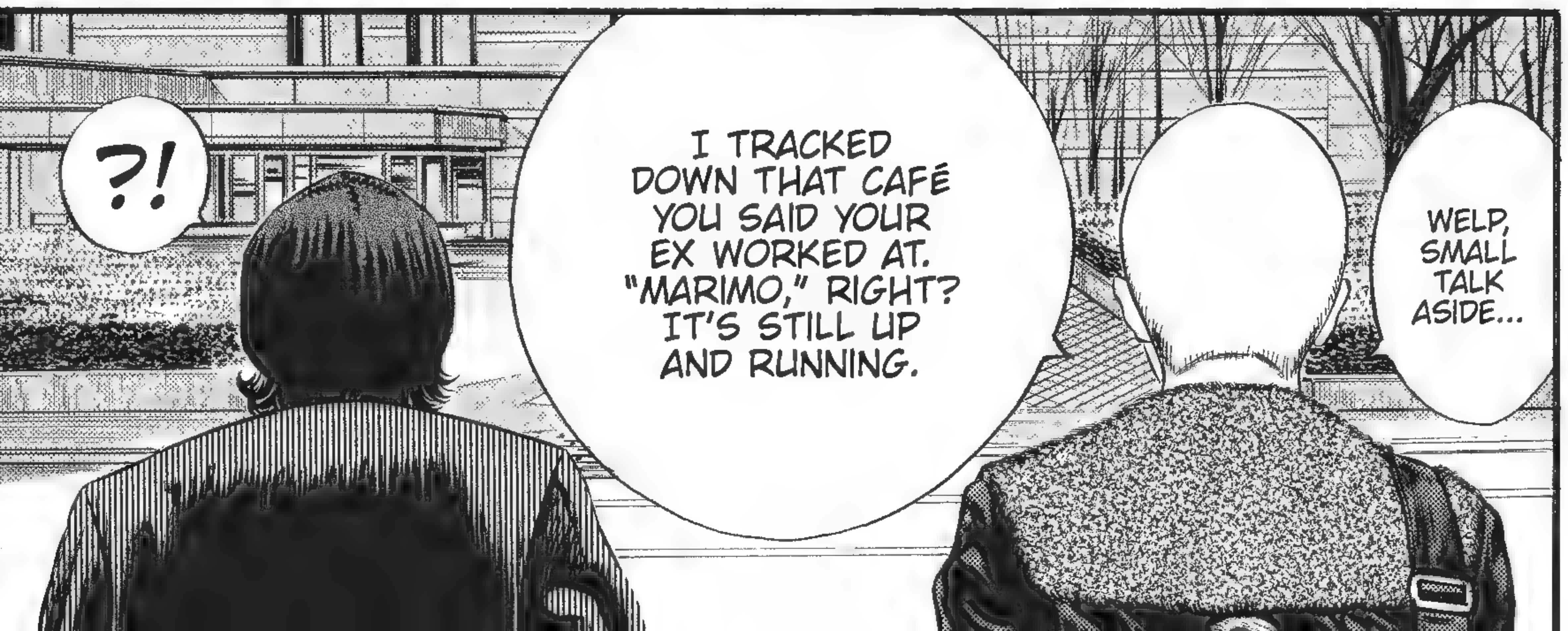
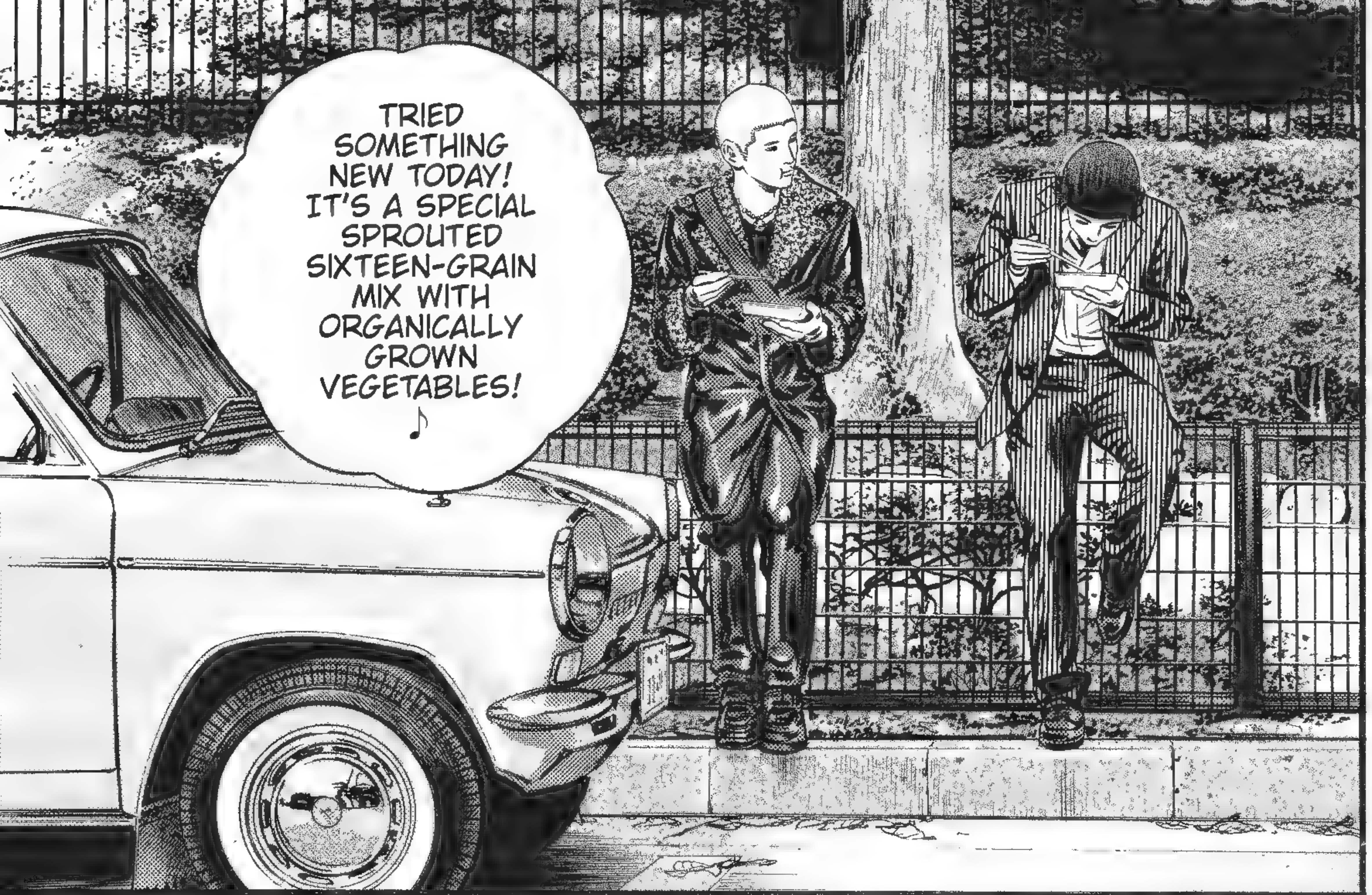


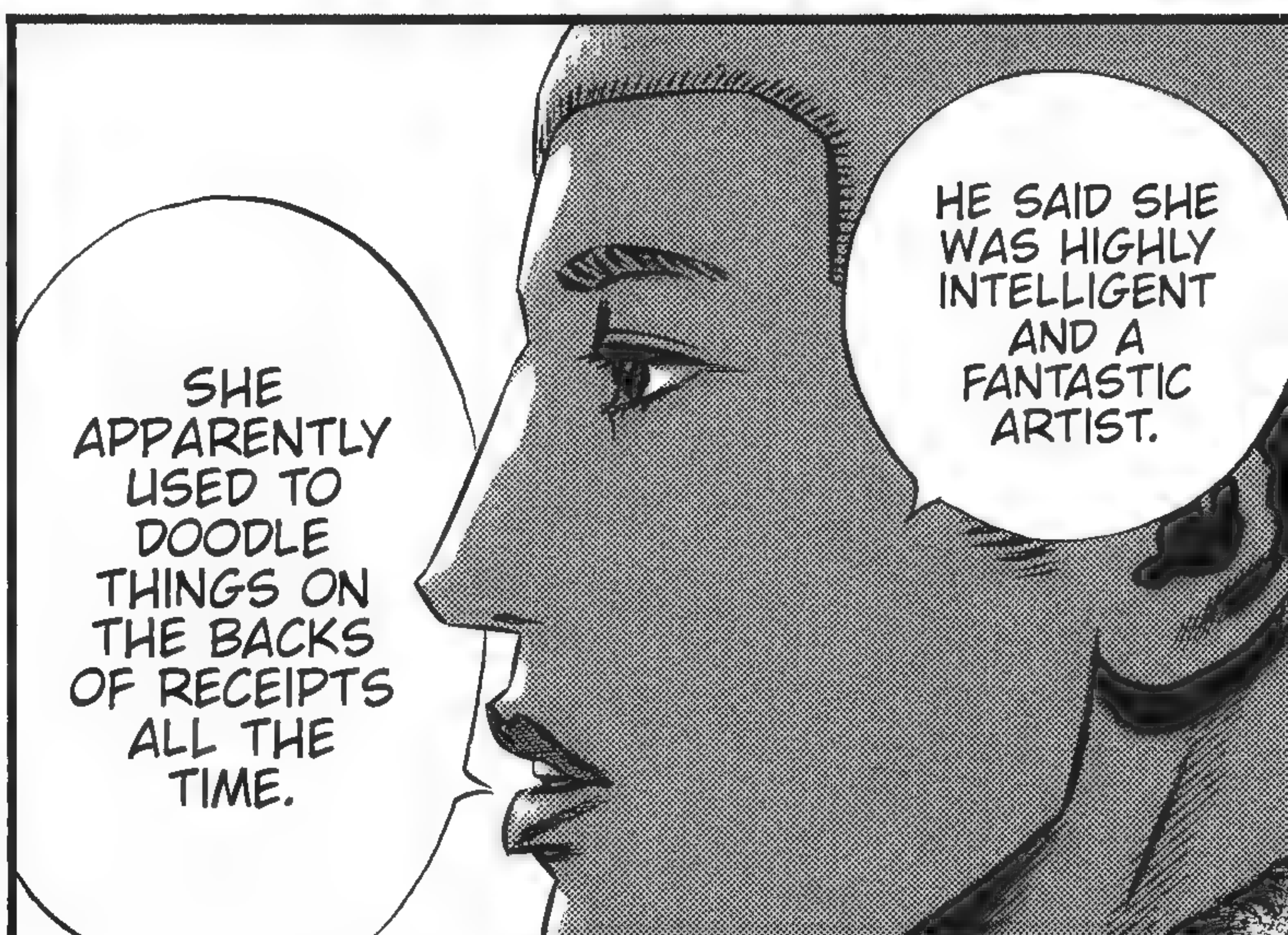




A
MIRROR?



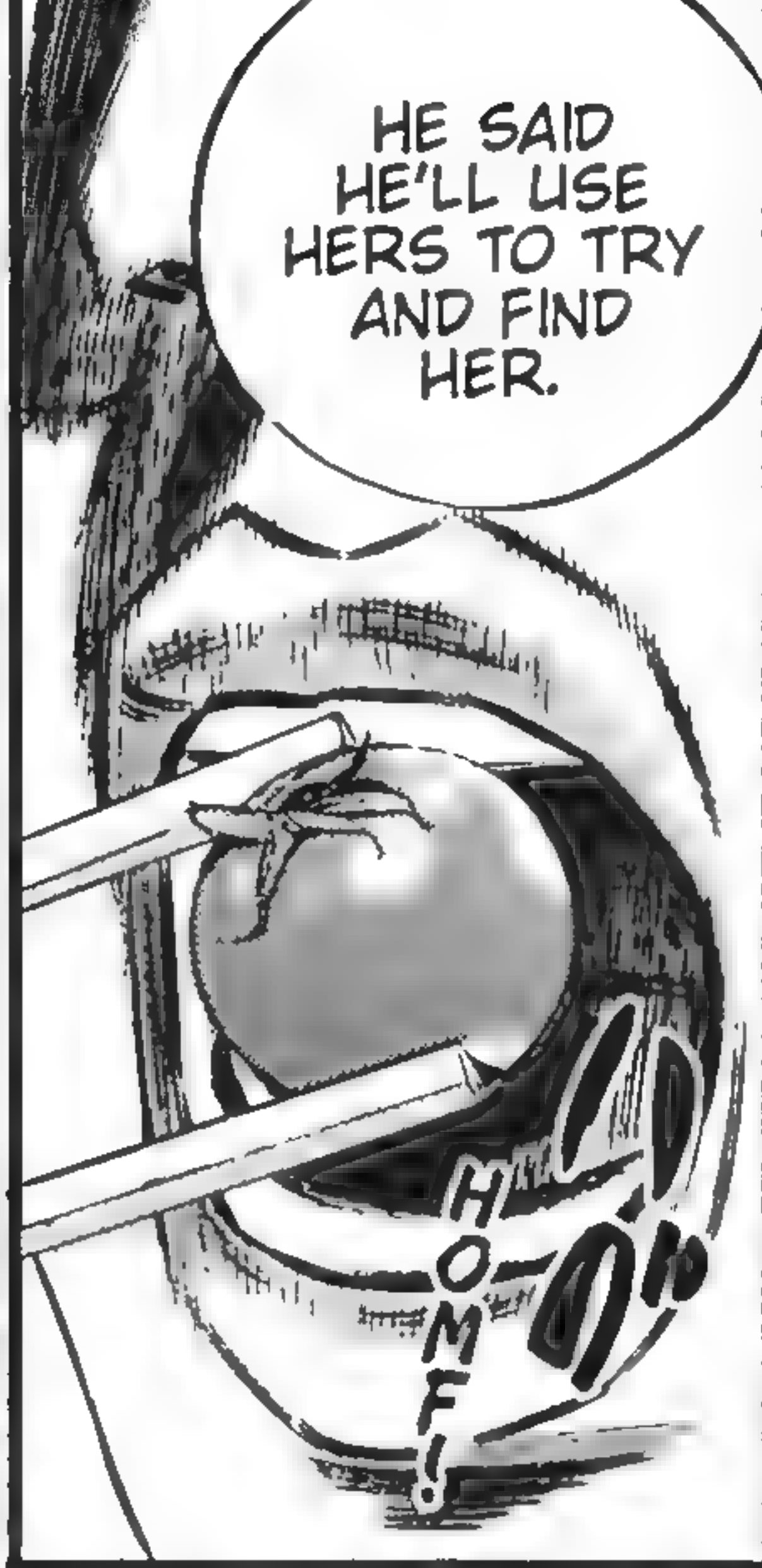






HE'LL LET
HER KNOW
WE WANNA
TALK.

AND IF
HE FINDS
HER...



HE SAID
HE'LL USE
HERS TO TRY
AND FIND
HER.



HE KEEPS THE
RESUMES OF
EVERYONE
WHO'S WORKED
FOR HIM.

LUCKILY,
HE'S A
THOROUGH
GUY.



I
SEE...

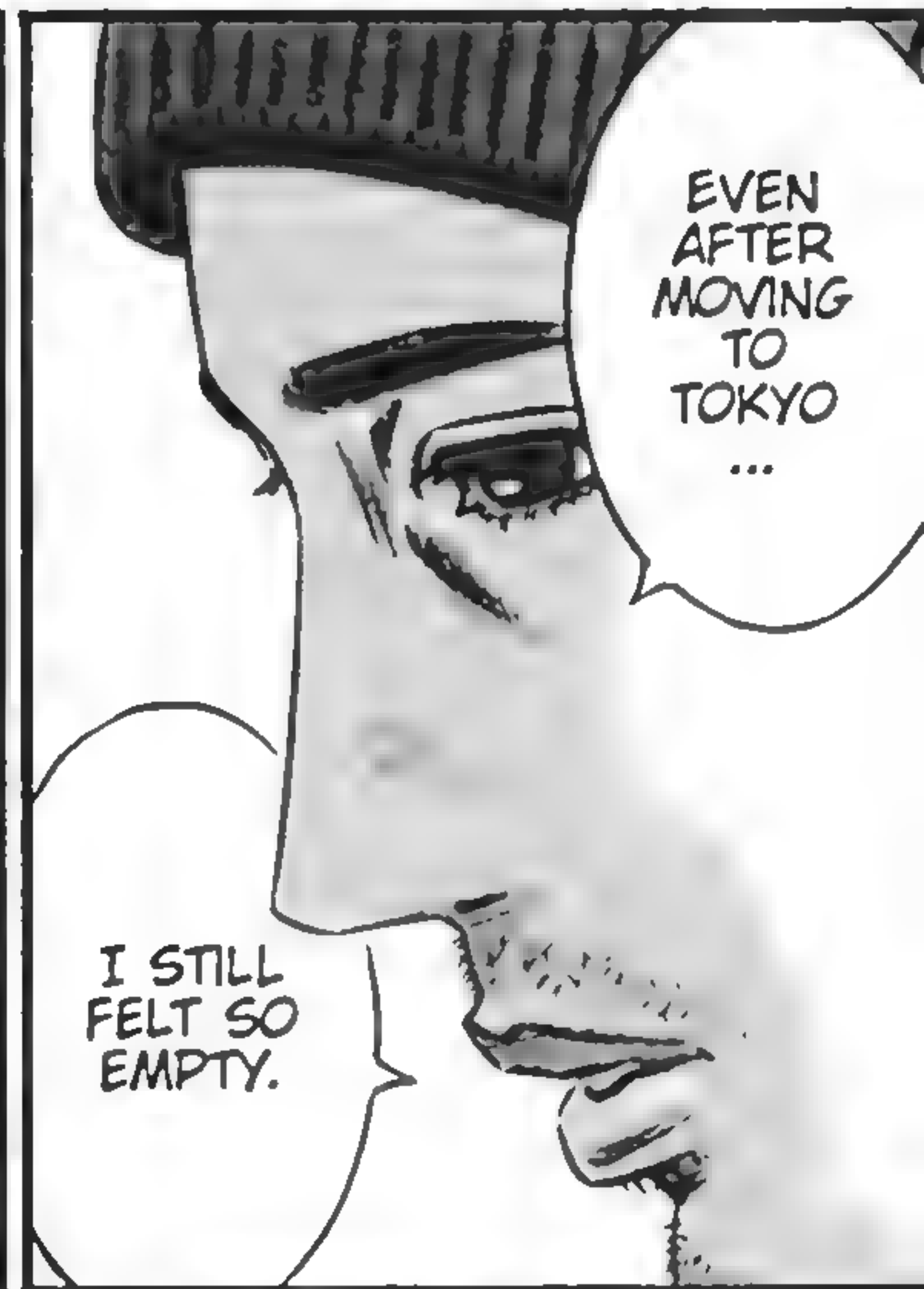
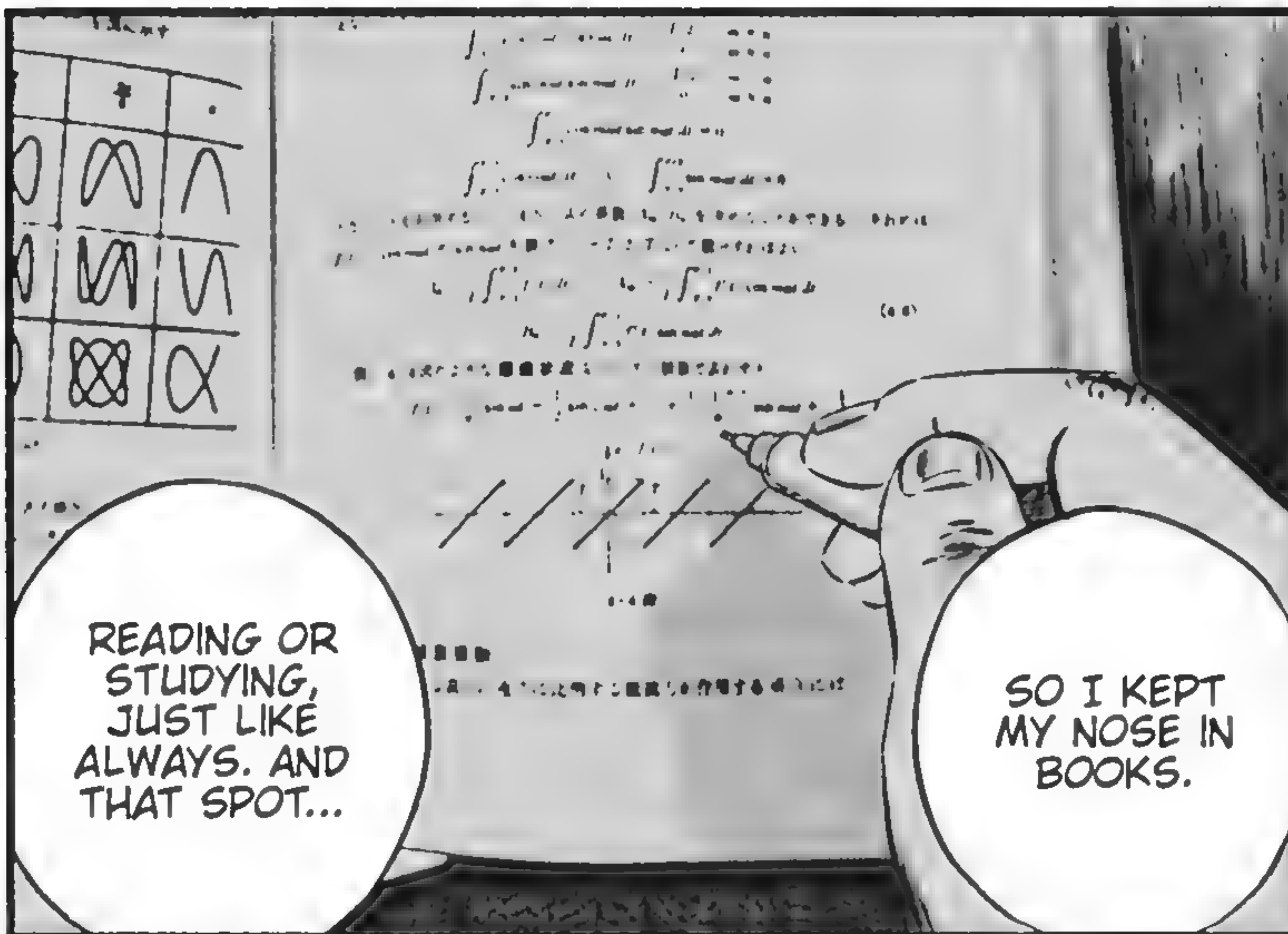


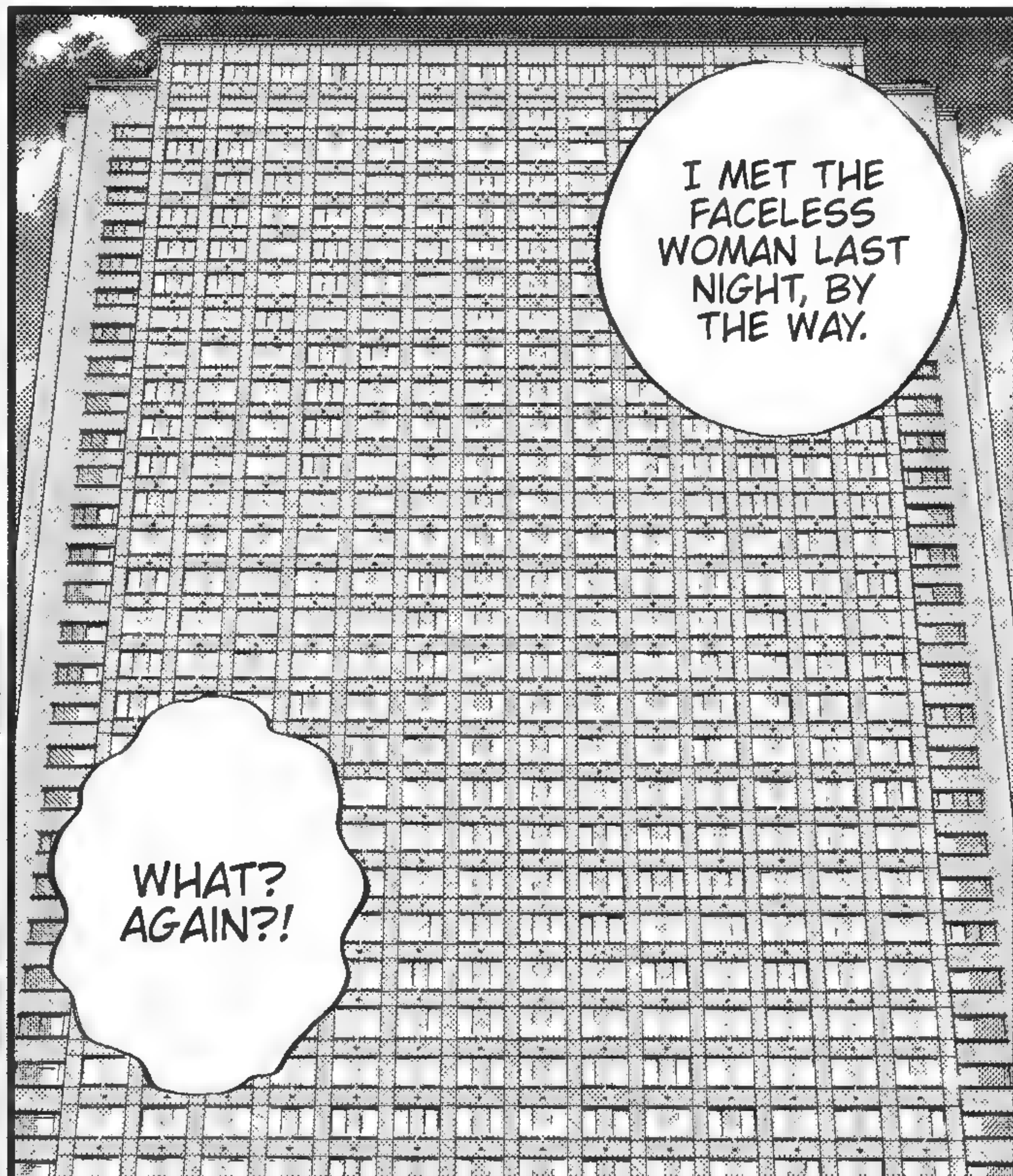
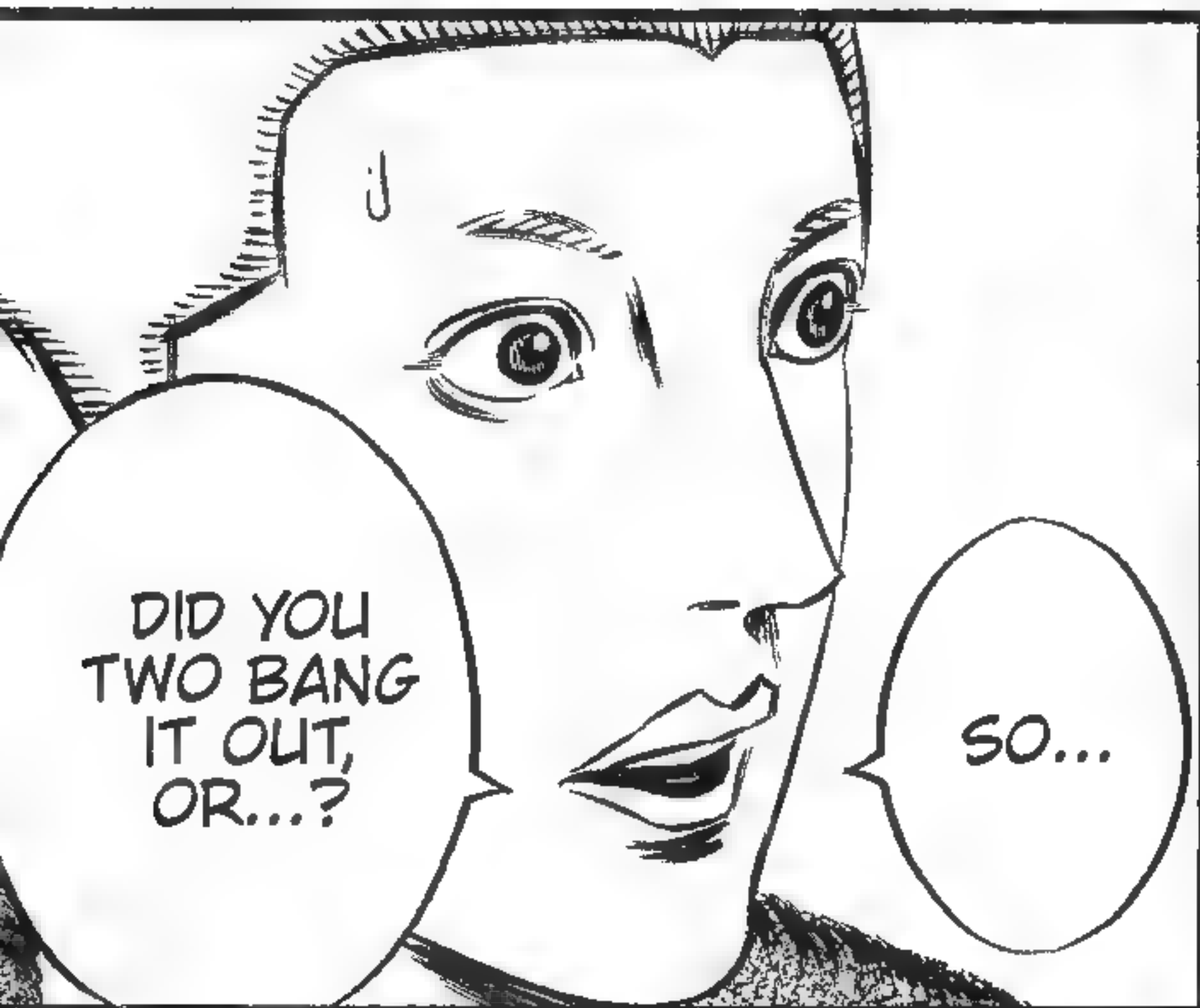
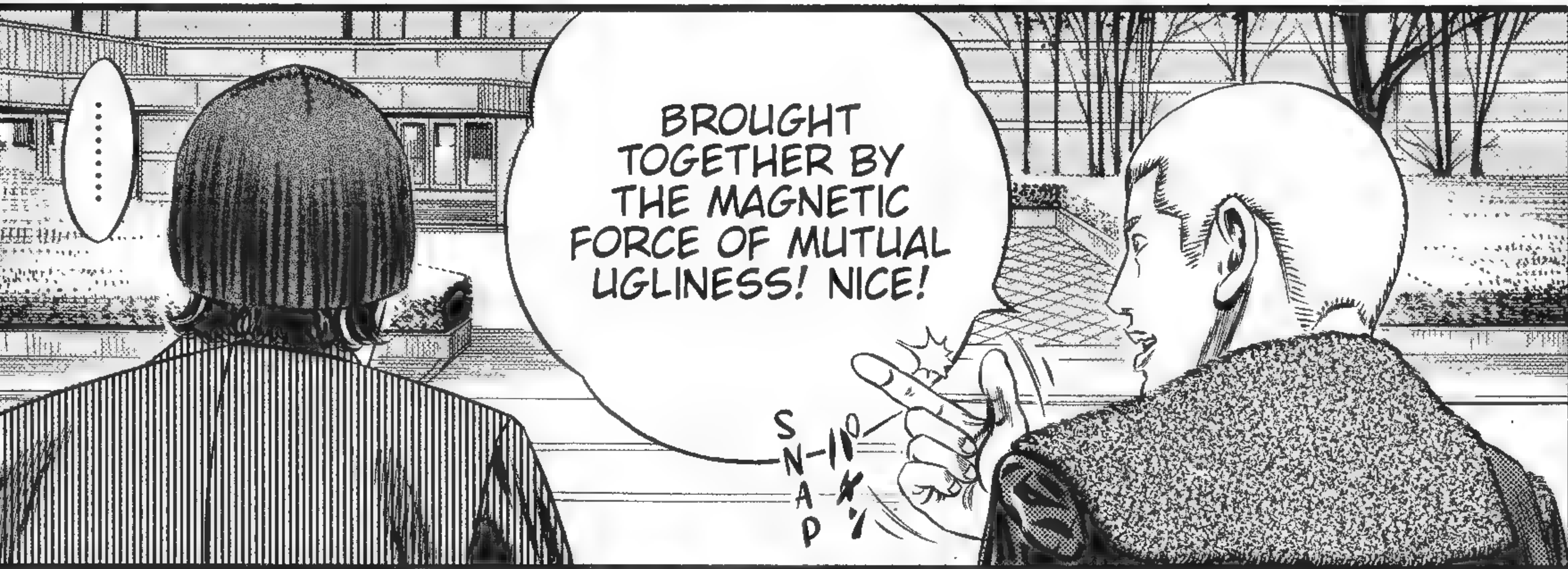
YEAH...



IT WAS
LIKE A RELIC
OF A BYGONE
AGE. LIKE,
SHOWA-ERA
OLD.

STILL, I WAS
SURPRISED
HOW RUN-
DOWN THAT
PLACE WAS.

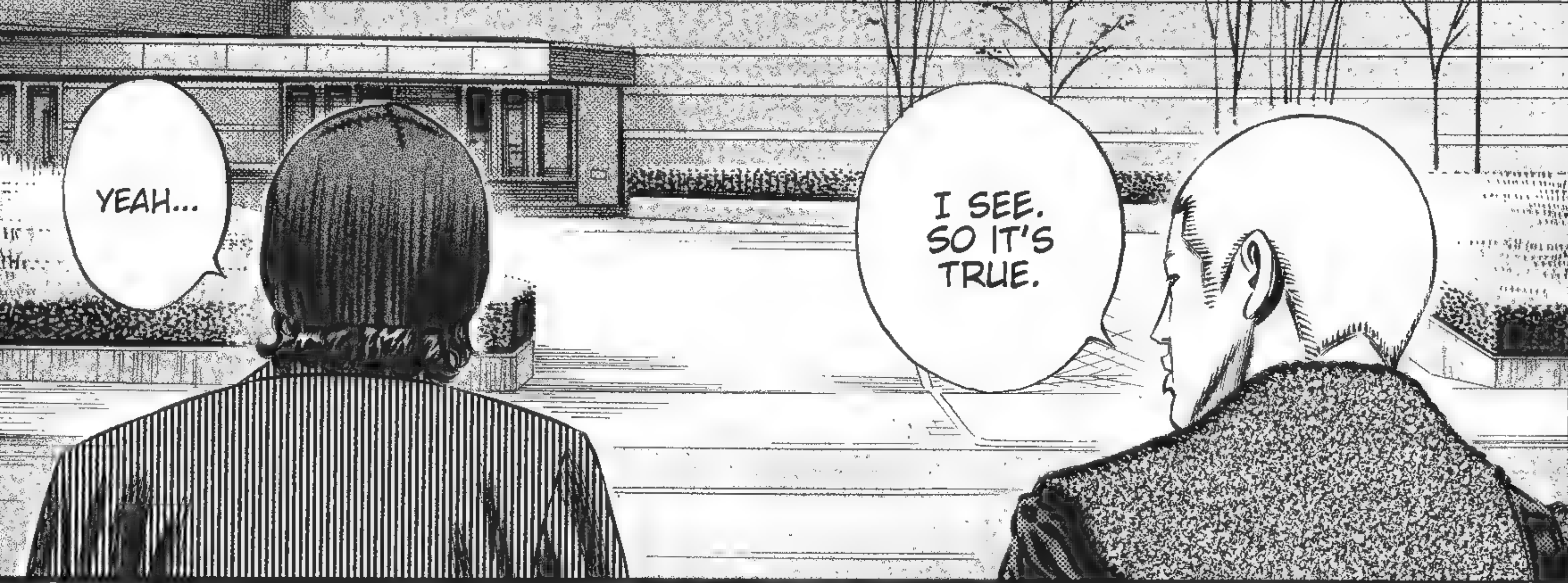














?!



I SAW ONE
FACE I DIDN'T
RECOGNIZE.



EXCEPT...
FOR ONE.

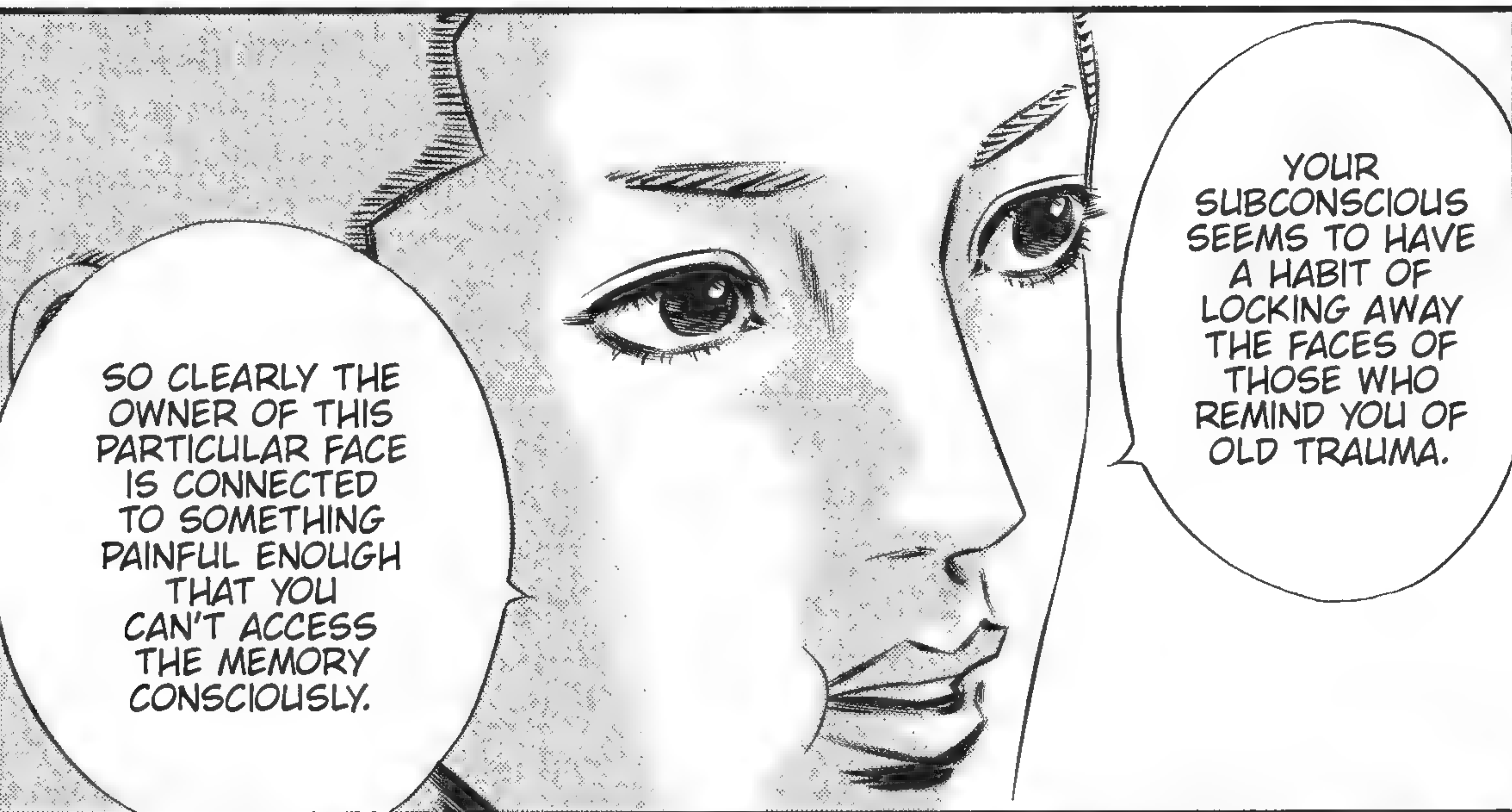
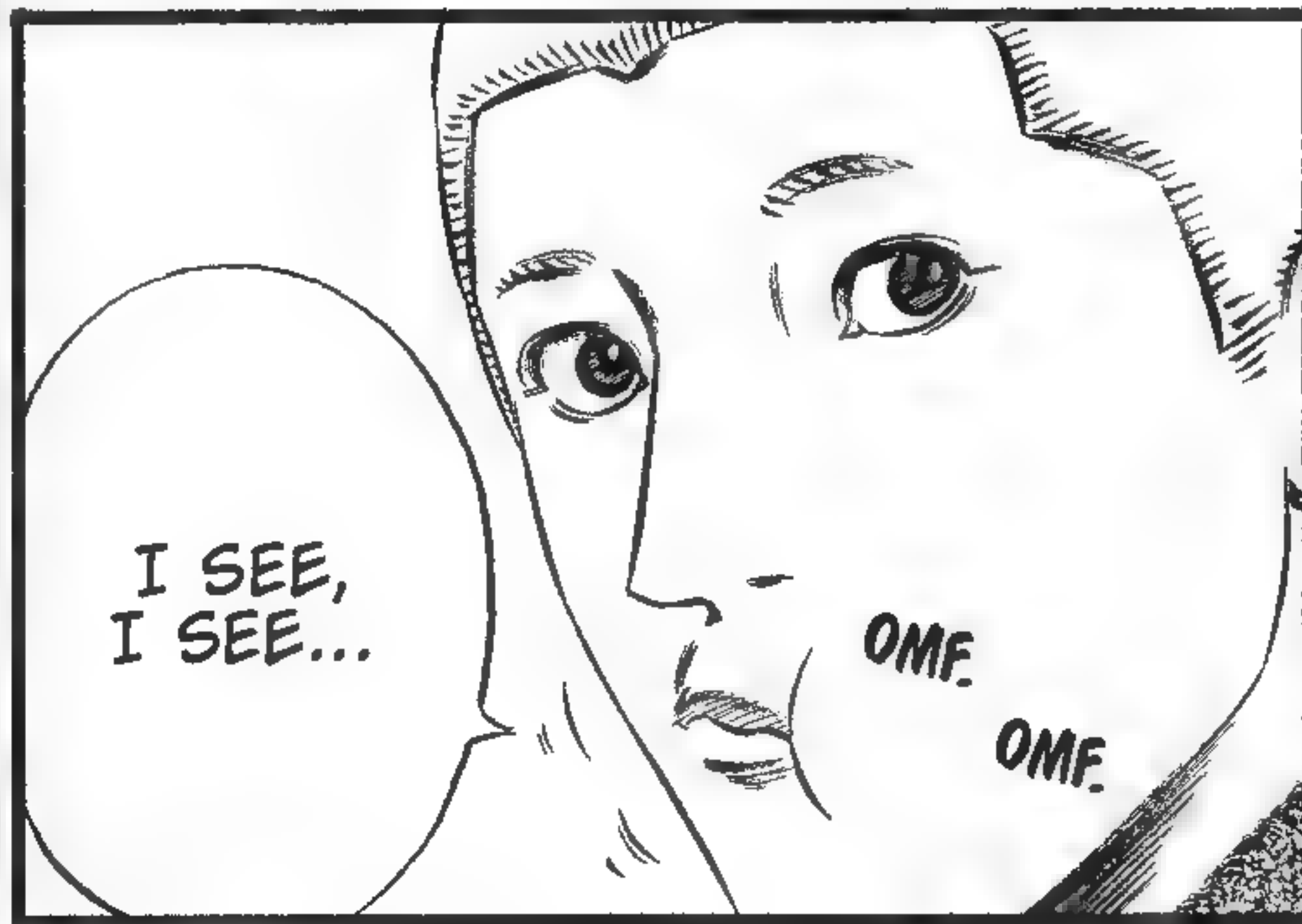
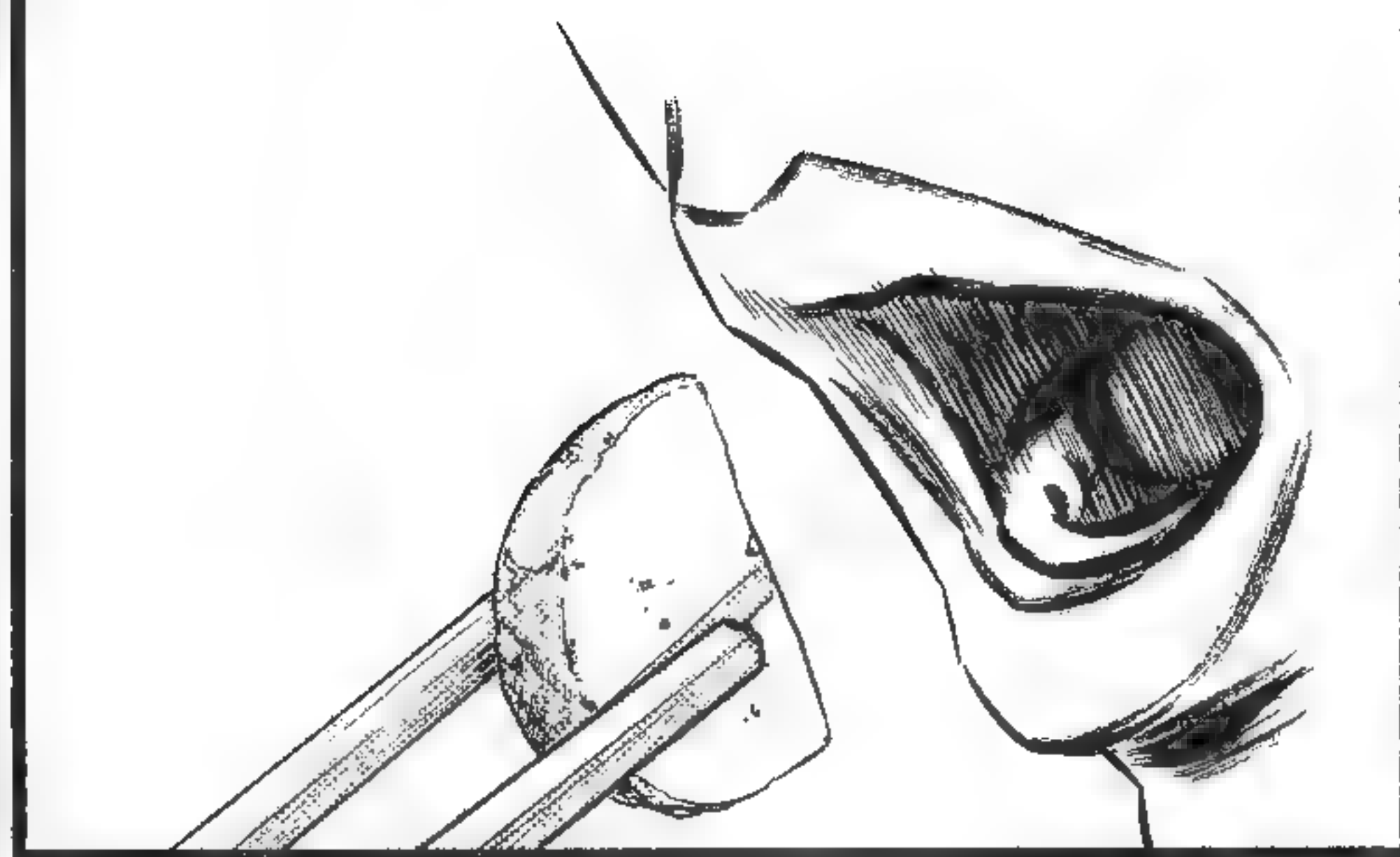
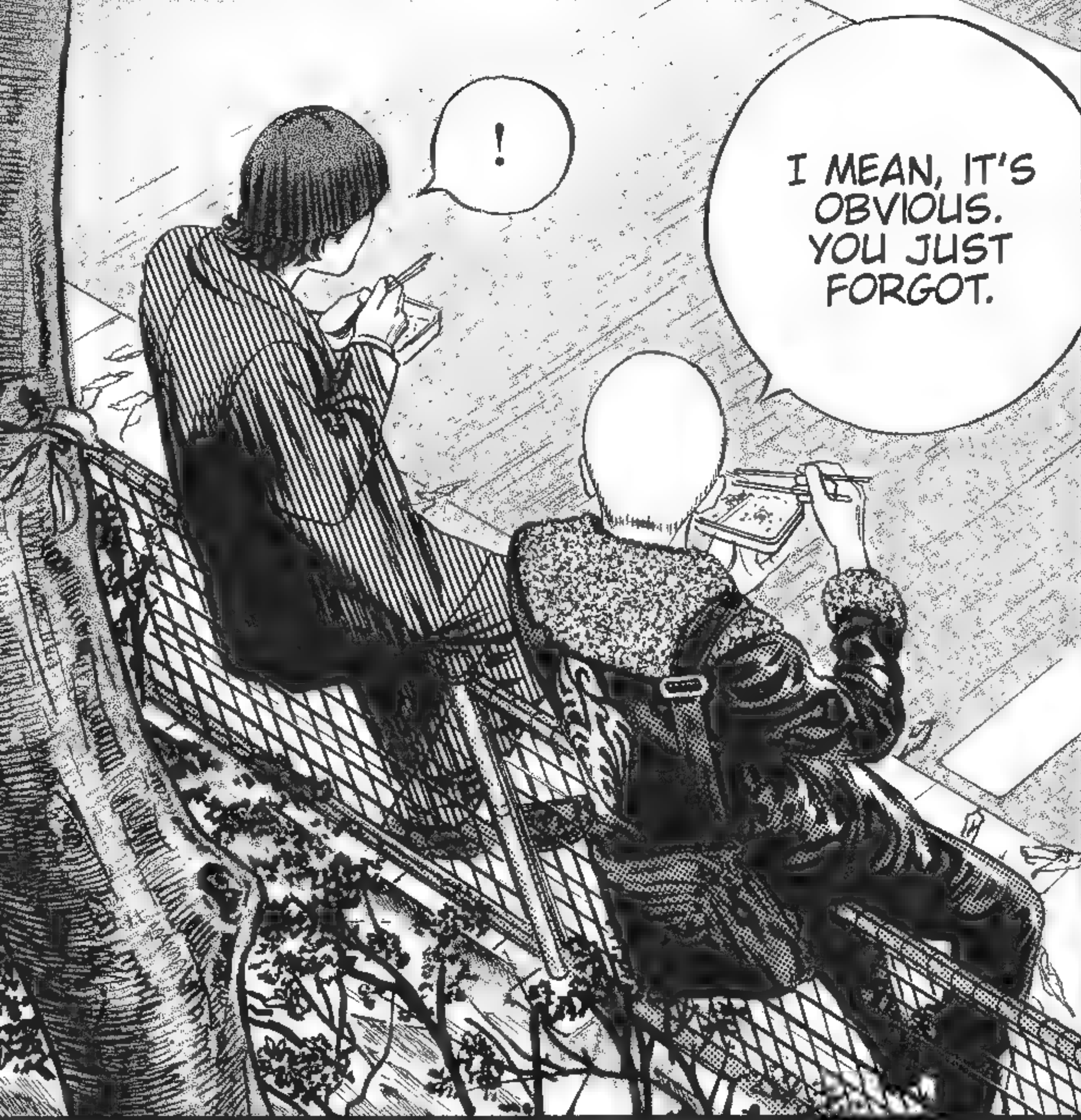


IT WAS
A TOTAL
STRANGER!

AS FAR
AS I CAN
REMEMBER,
I'VE NEVER
SEEN THAT
FACE BEFORE
IN MY LIFE.



WHO THE
HELL WAS
THAT...?





.....!



IN SUM,
UGLY AS
FUCK.



WHAT'D
HE LOOK
LIKE?

"HIM,"
HUH?



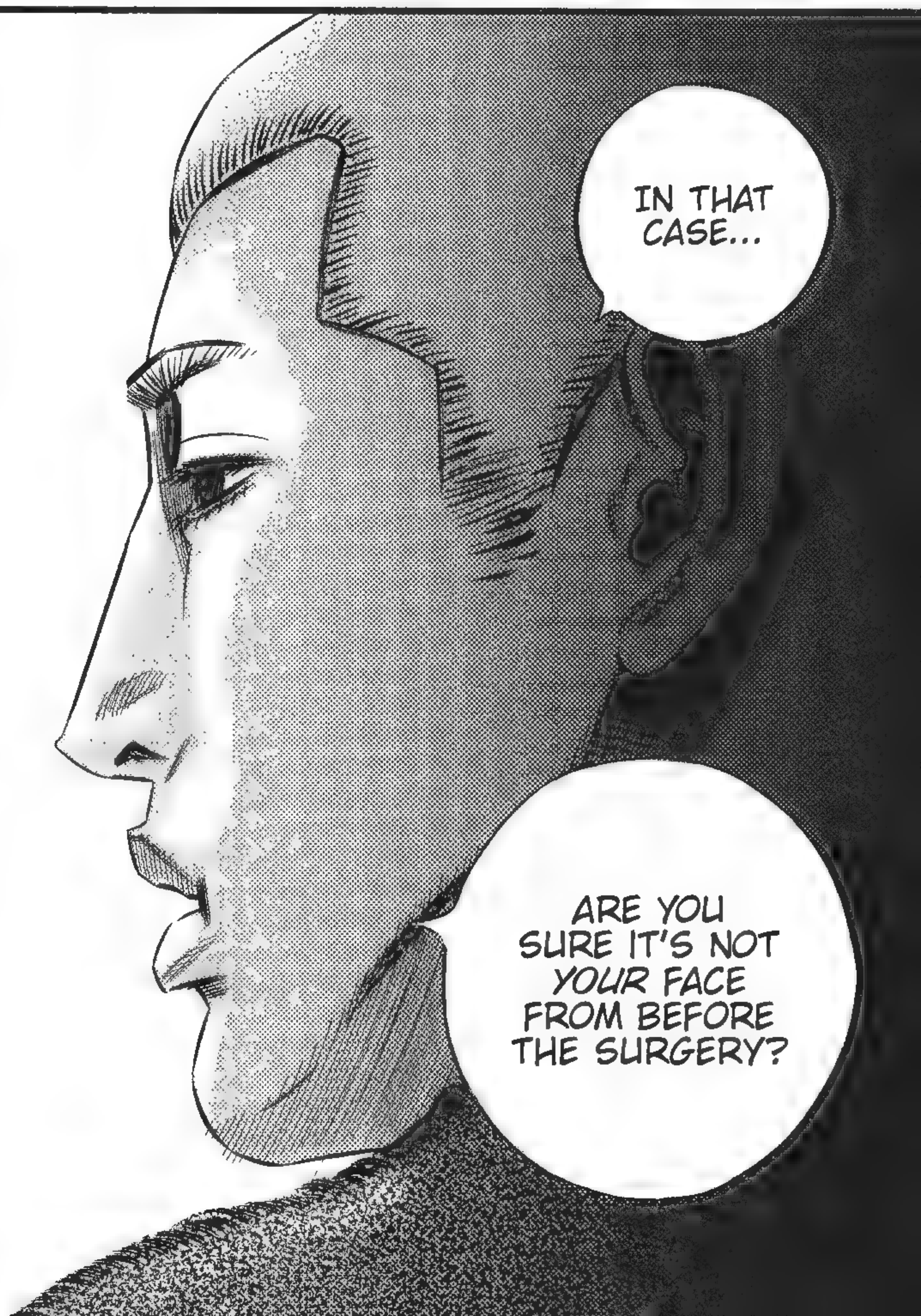
GNARLY
TEETH...

SAGGING
EYES...

PIGGISH
SNOUT...



!!



IN THAT
CASE...

ARE YOU
SURE IT'S NOT
YOUR FACE
FROM BEFORE
THE SURGERY?



WELL...

YES.



YOU SAW A
PHOTO OF THE
OLD ME WITH
YOUR OWN EYES,
REMEMBER?



IT CAN'T
BE.



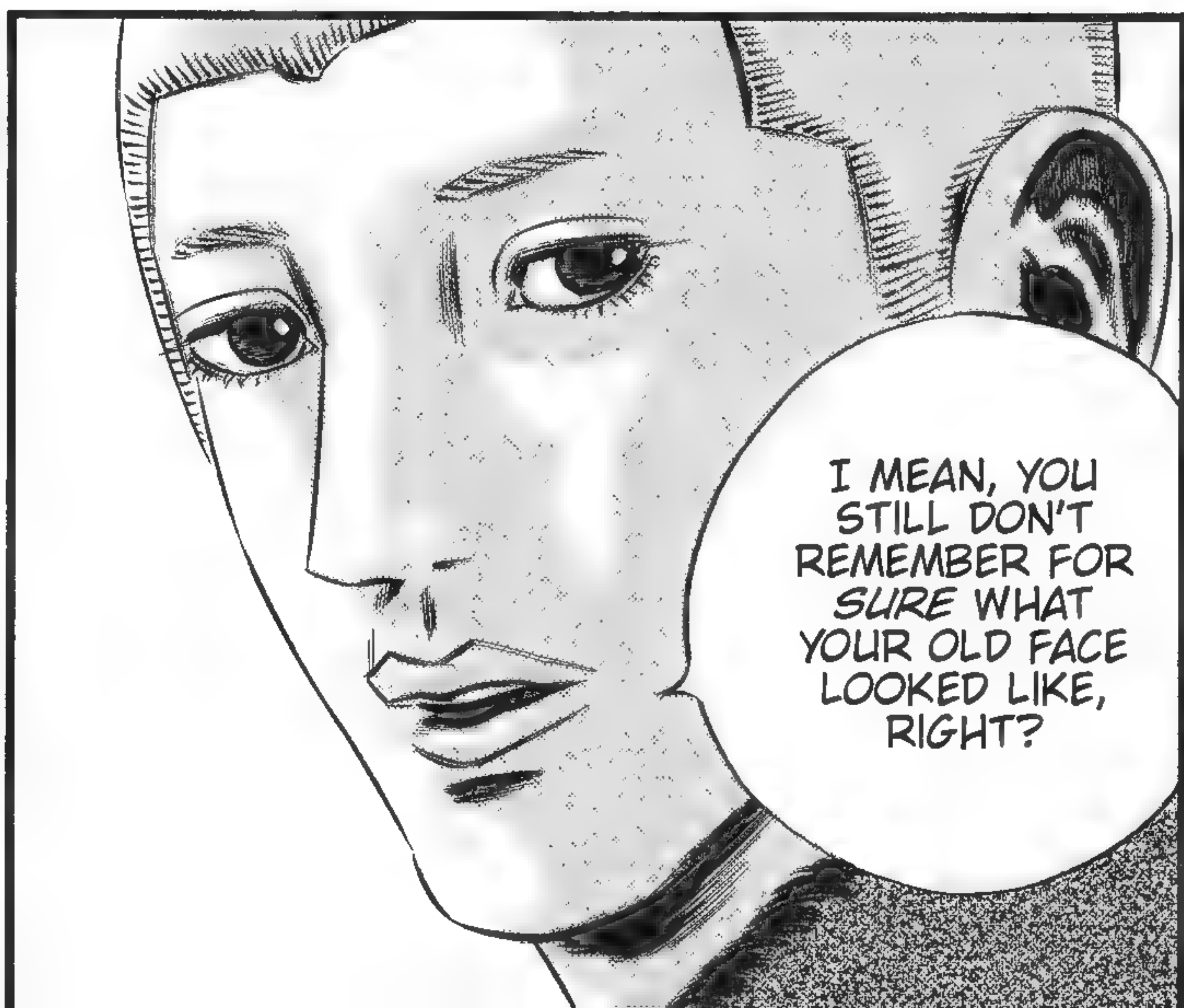
ARE YOU SURE
IT WAS OF YOU,
NAKOSHI-SAN?

BUT THAT
PHOTO...

?!



...



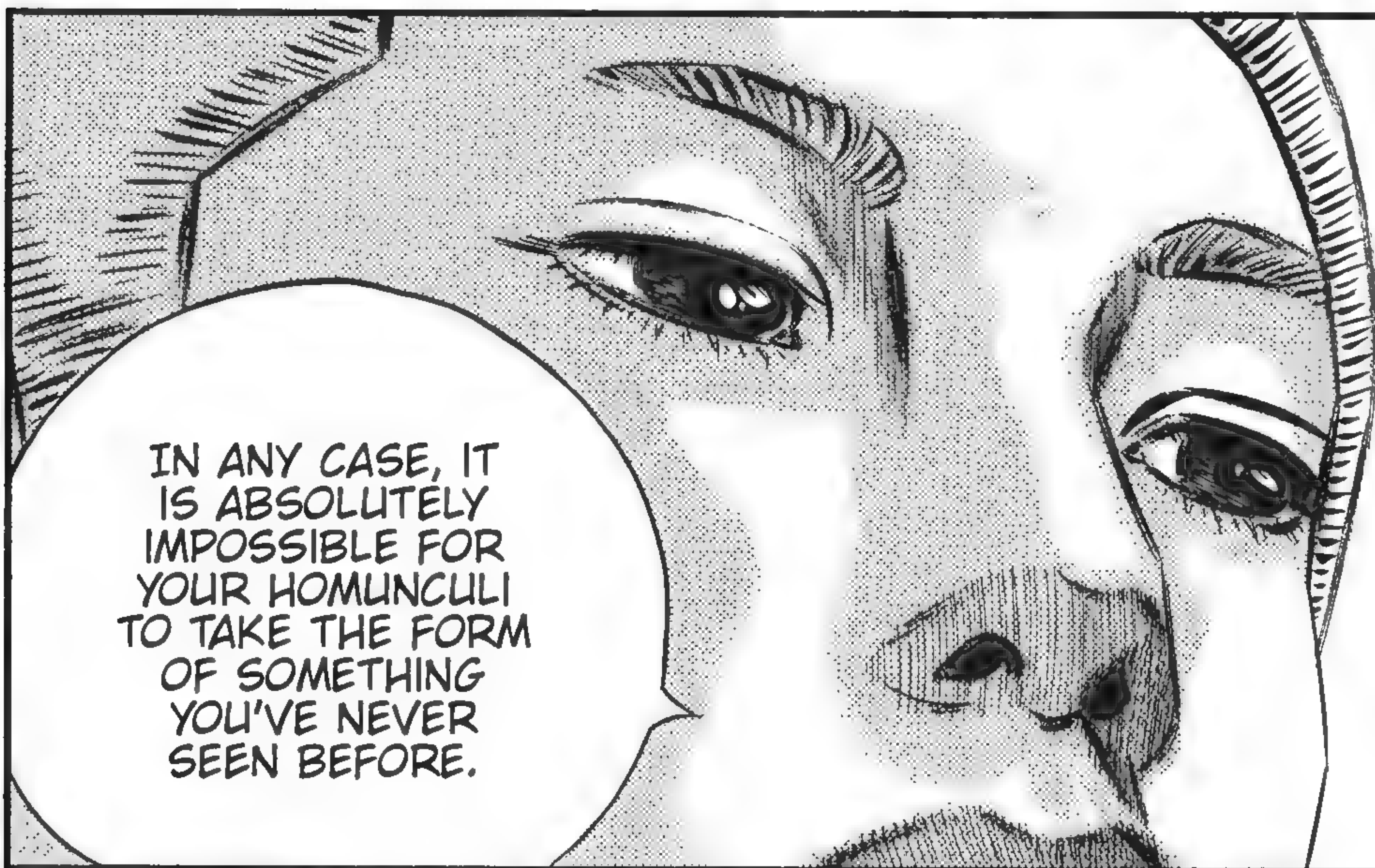
I MEAN, YOU
STILL DON'T
REMEMBER FOR
SURE WHAT
YOUR OLD FACE
LOOKED LIKE,
RIGHT?



MAYBE THAT
HOMUNCULUS
IS YOUR
SUBCONSCIOUS
TRYING TO
REMIND YOU
OF YOUR TRUE
FACE!

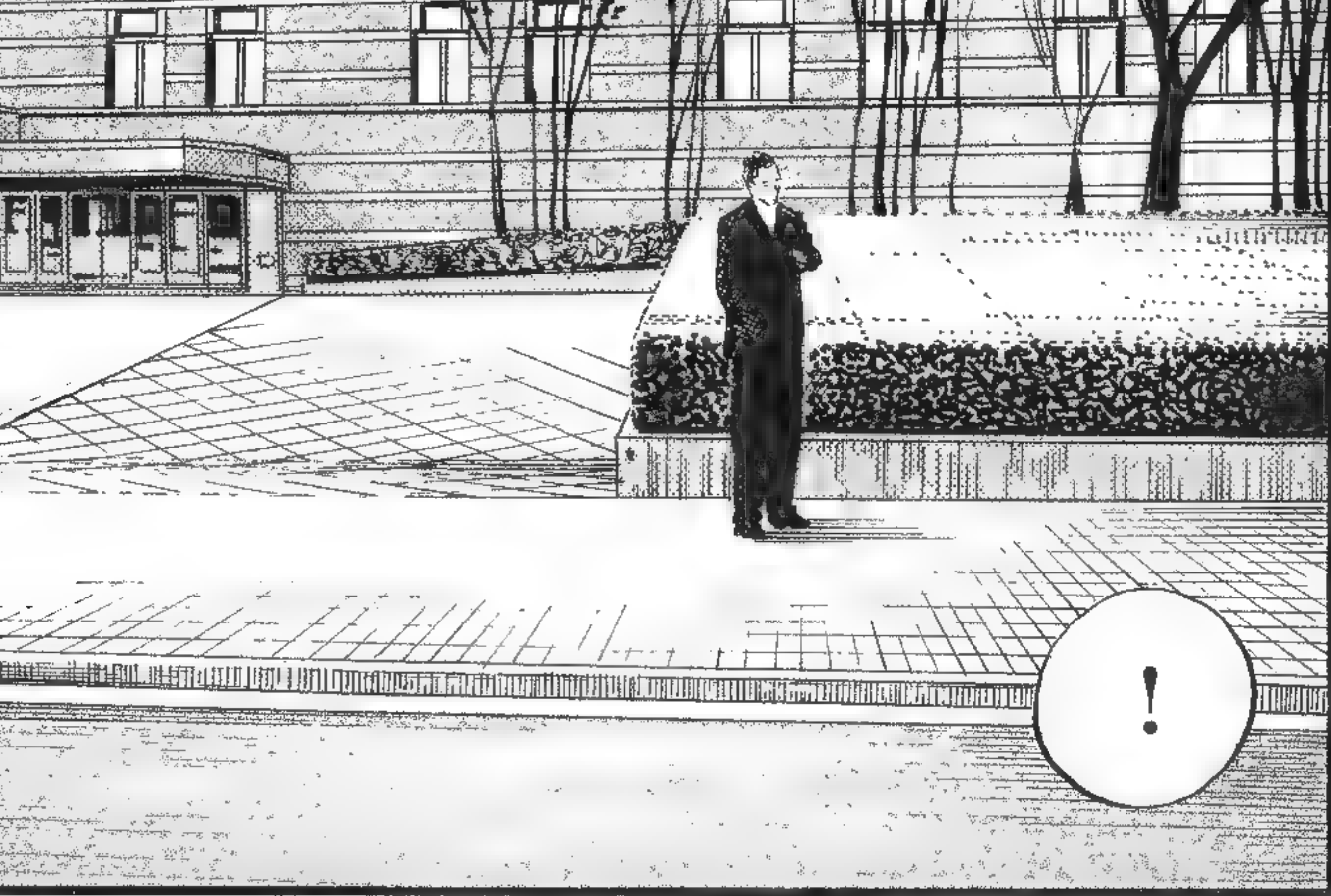


WHO
KNOWS!



IN ANY CASE, IT
IS ABSOLUTELY
IMPOSSIBLE FOR
YOUR HOMUNCULI
TO TAKE THE FORM
OF SOMETHING
YOU'VE NEVER
SEEN BEFORE.





SHE'S GOT
A STRONG
STOMACH!
WHY WOULD
YOU SLEEP
WITH THAT?

THAT
CREEPO
IS ONE
OF HER
DADDIES?!

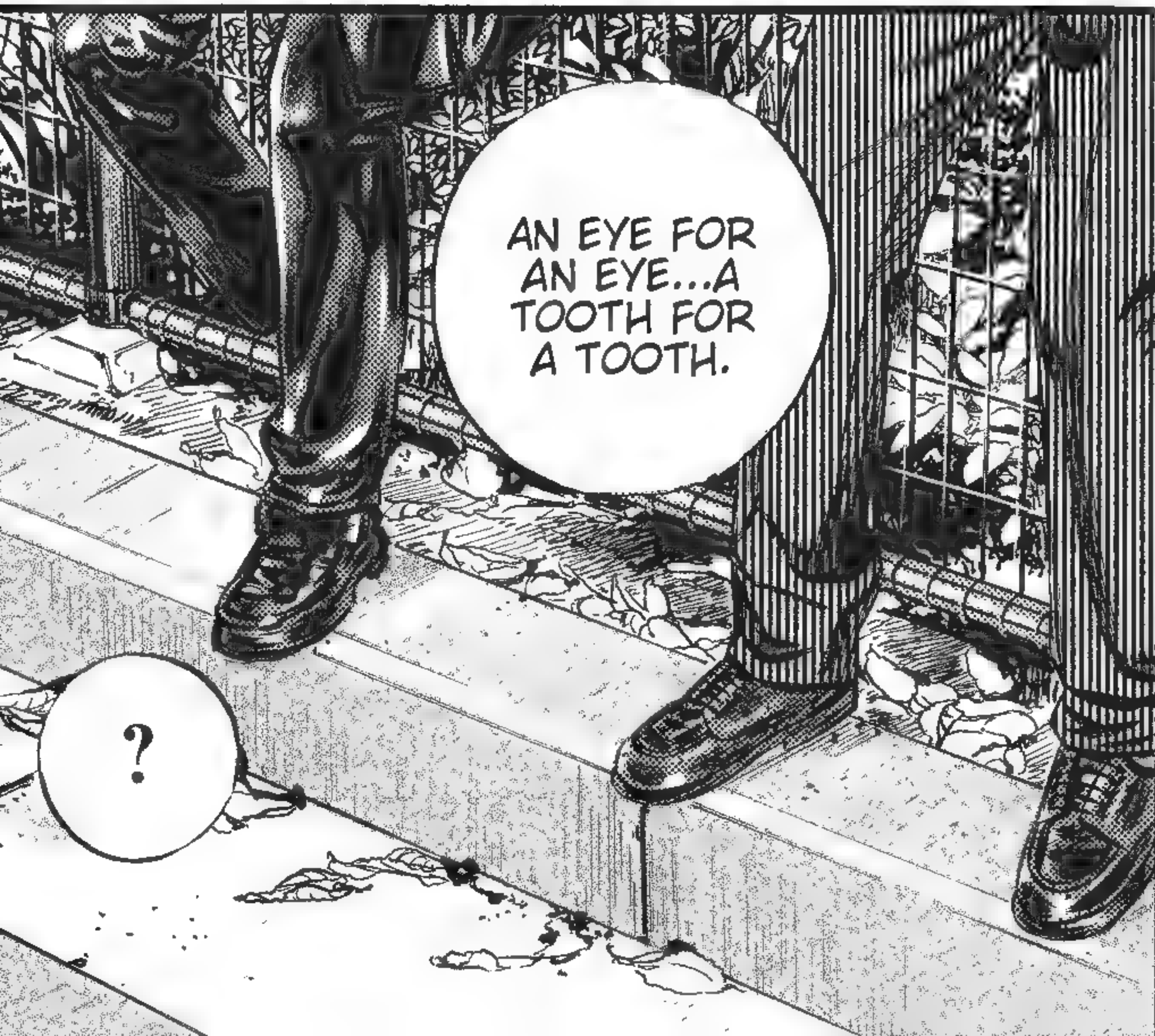


EW!



THAT
GUY...

HE'S
ONE OF
HERS.

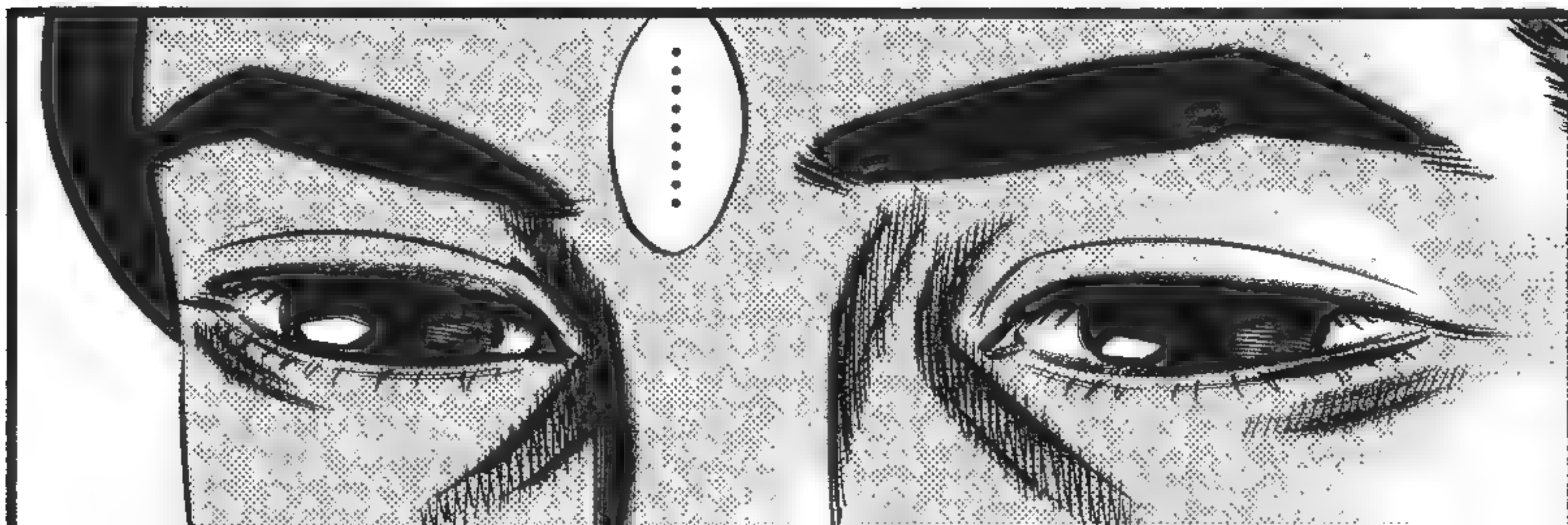


AN EYE FOR
AN EYE...A
TOOTH FOR
A TOOTH.



YOU'VE GOT
NO CHOICE
BUT TO ONLY
LOOK AT
MONEY.

WHY NOT? IF
ALL ANYONE
LOOKS AT IS
YOUR BODY...



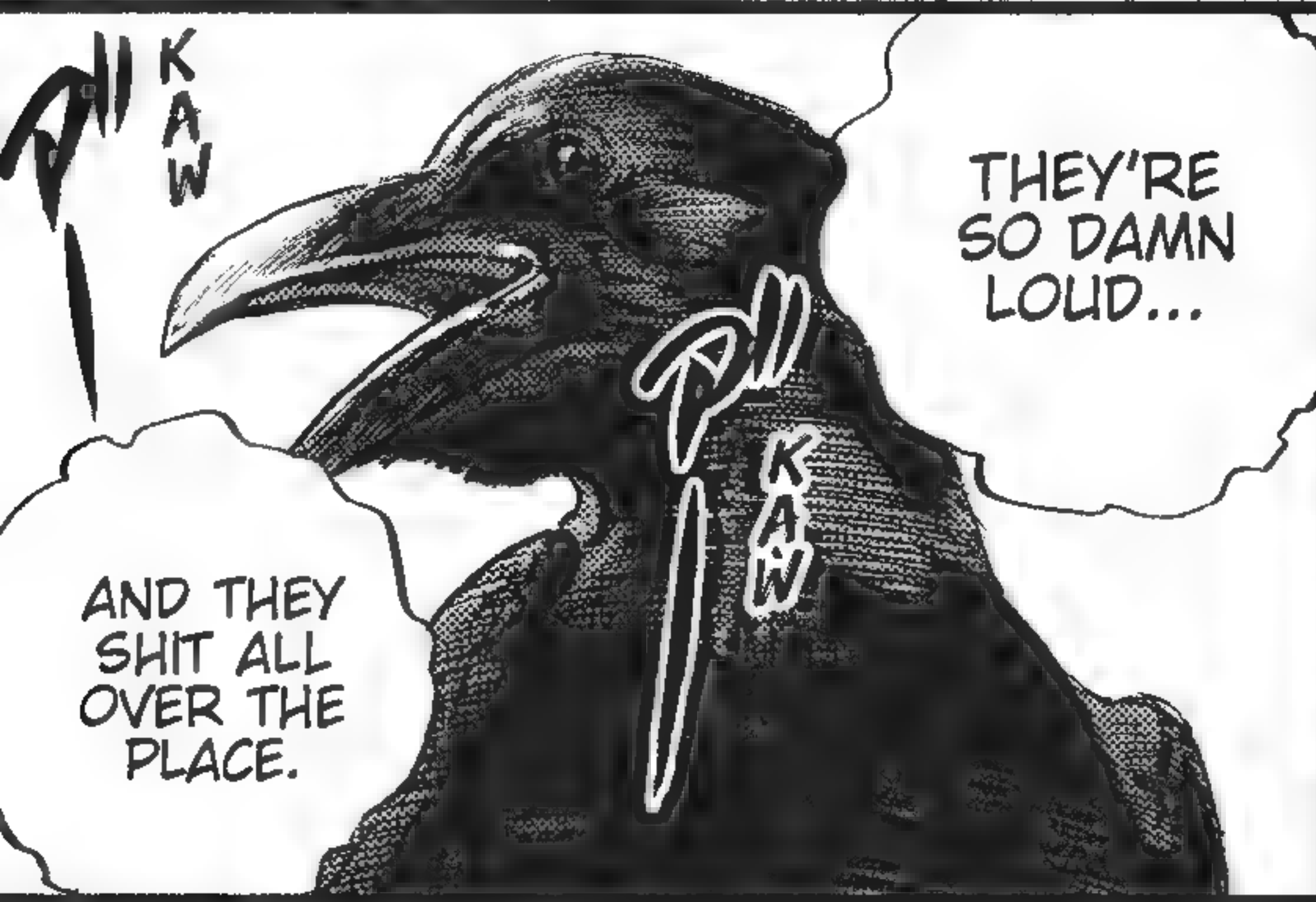






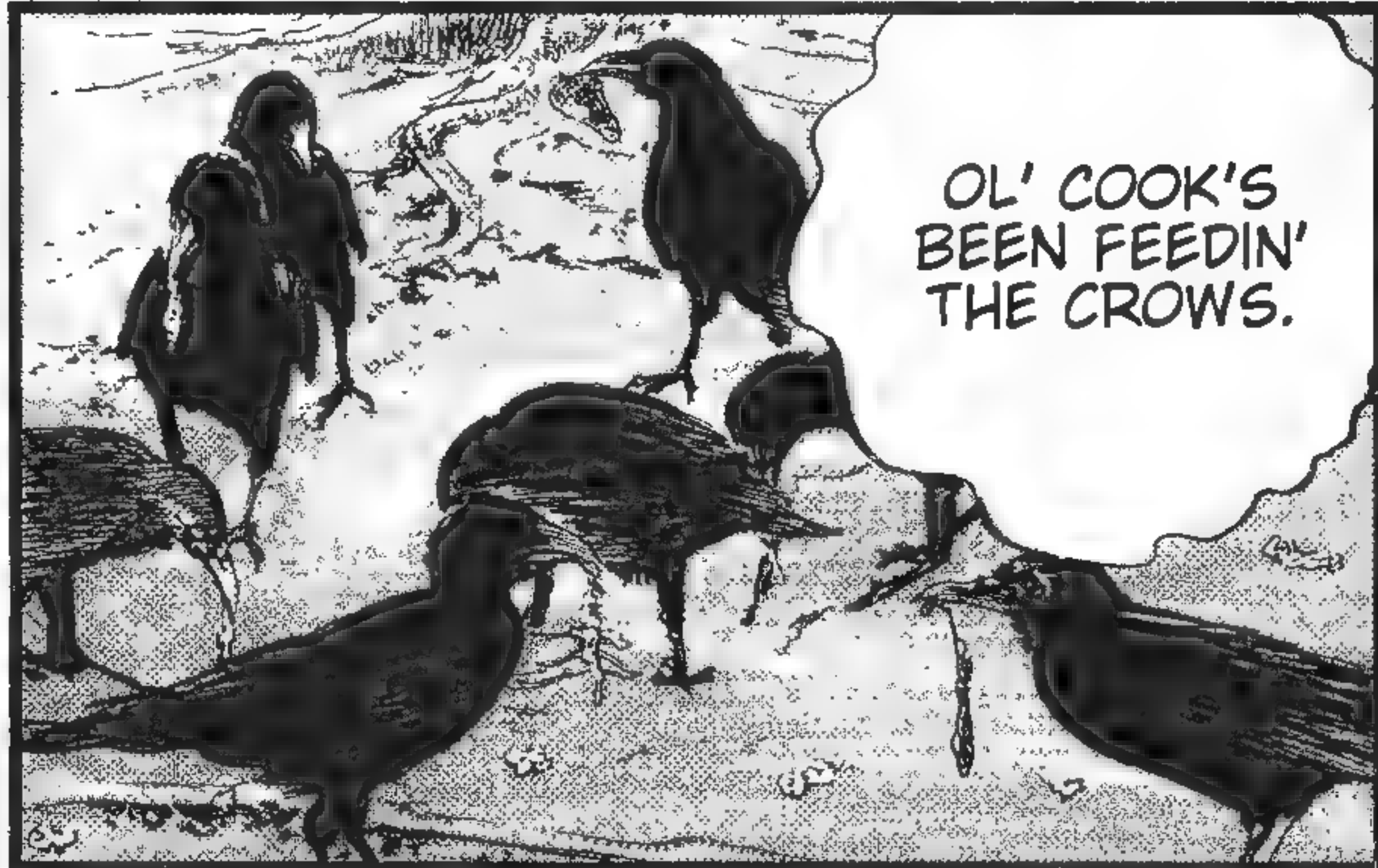


EVER SINCE
THAT FIGHT
WITH THE CITY
GUY...



THEY'RE
SO DAMN
LOUD...

AND THEY
SHIT ALL
OVER THE
PLACE.

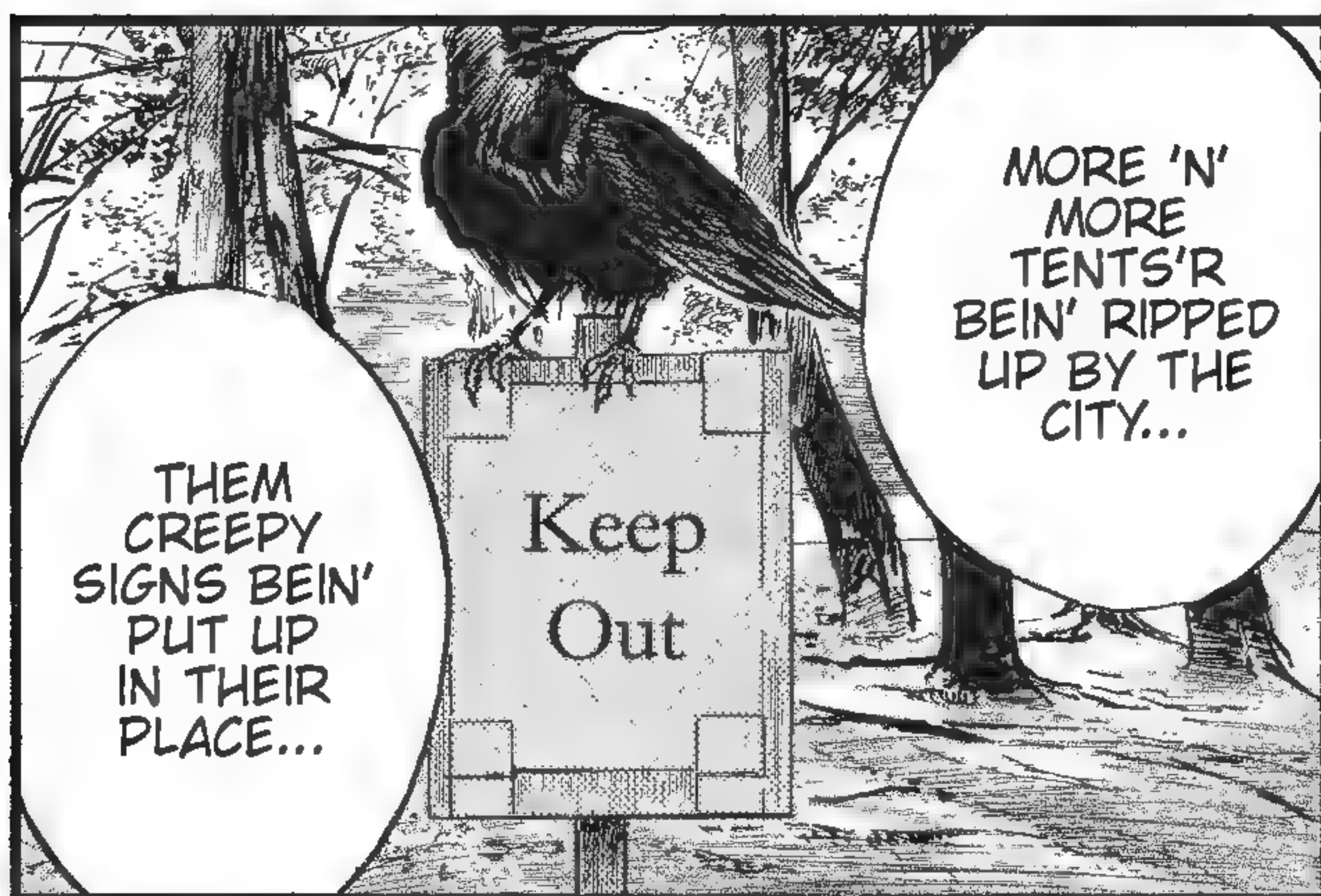


OL' COOK'S
BEEN FEEDIN'
THE CROWS.



MOST OF ALL,
IT'S JUST...
UNSETTLIN'.

IT'S DRIVIN'
THE REST OF
THE FELLAS
CRAZY TOO.





I MEAN, WE'RE
ONLY HERE
'CAUSE WE AIN'T
GOT NOWHERE
ELSE TO GO!



IF THEY
KICK US
OUT...THEN
WHAT?



THE
OTHER
THING
...?



AND I BET
HE DOESN'T
WANT TO
LEAVE THE
OTHER
THING,
EITHER.



DOESN'T
WANNA
LEAVE THE
PARK...



DOESN'T
WANNA LEAVE
HIS TENT...

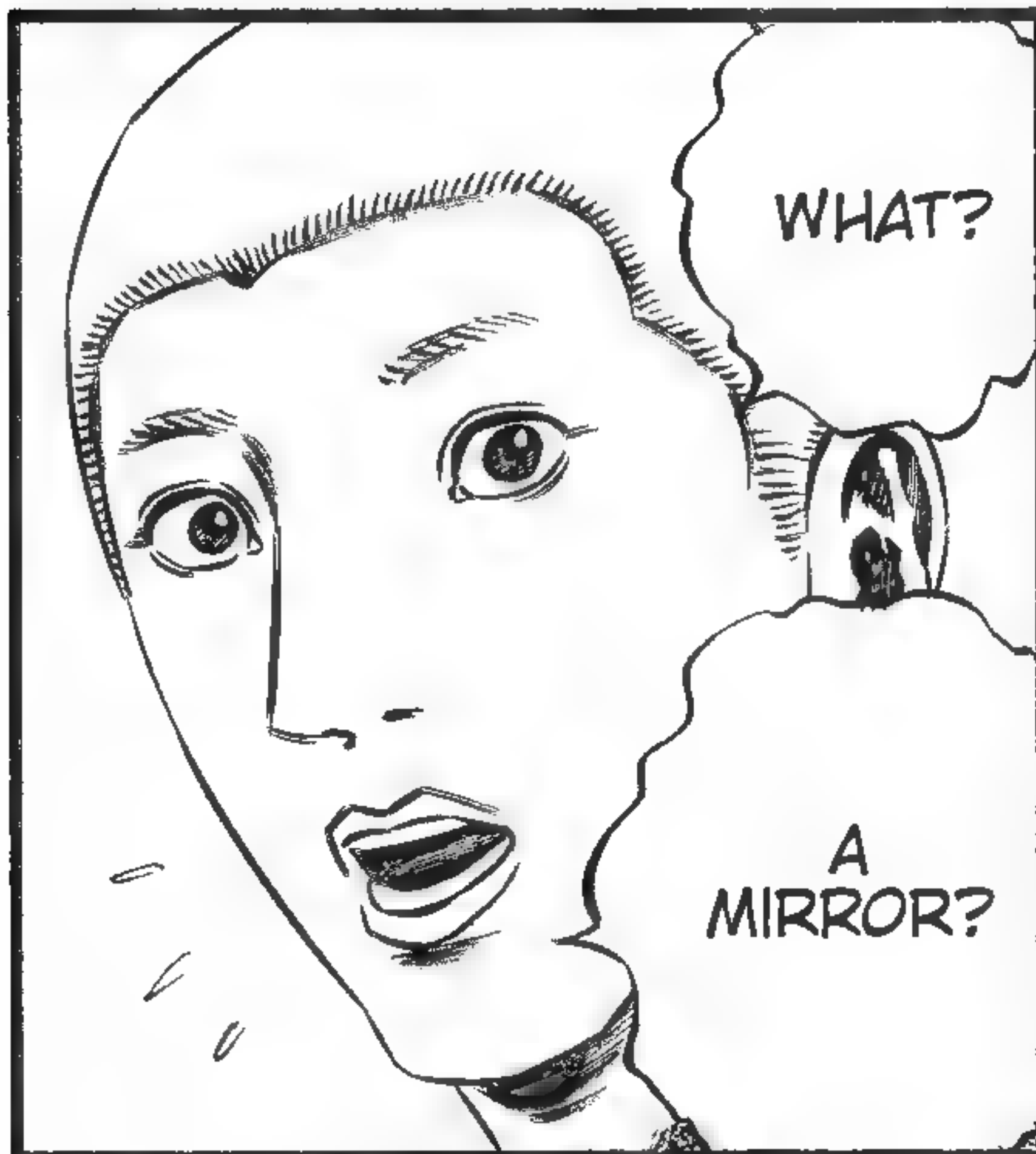


HEY.

YEAH?



.....



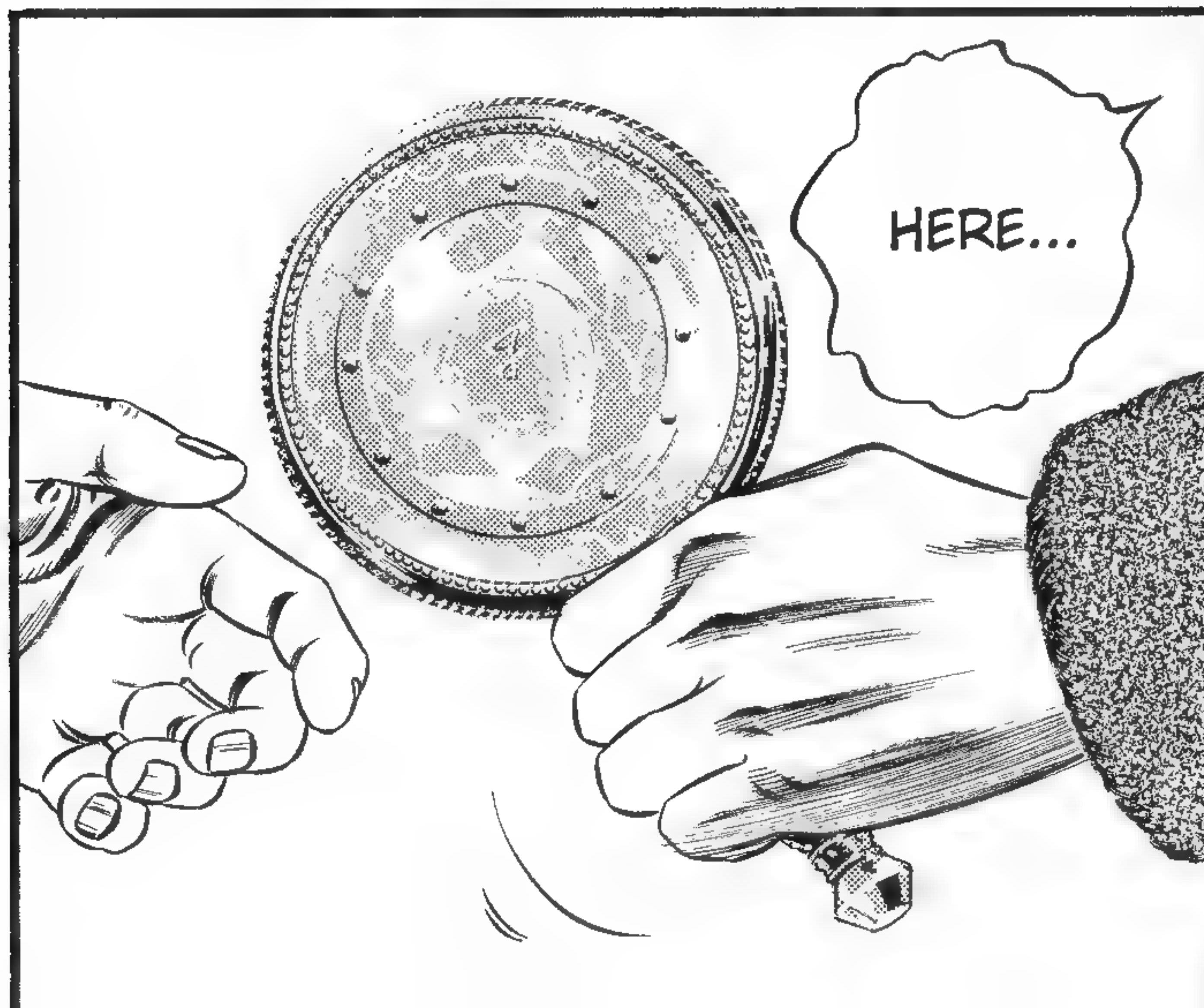
WHAT?

A
MIRROR?



AND
IF SO, CAN
I BORROW
IT?

ANY
CHANCE
YOU'VE
GOT A
MIRROR?



HERE...



WELL...

UH...

I DO...
HAPPEN TO
HAVE ONE,
YES.

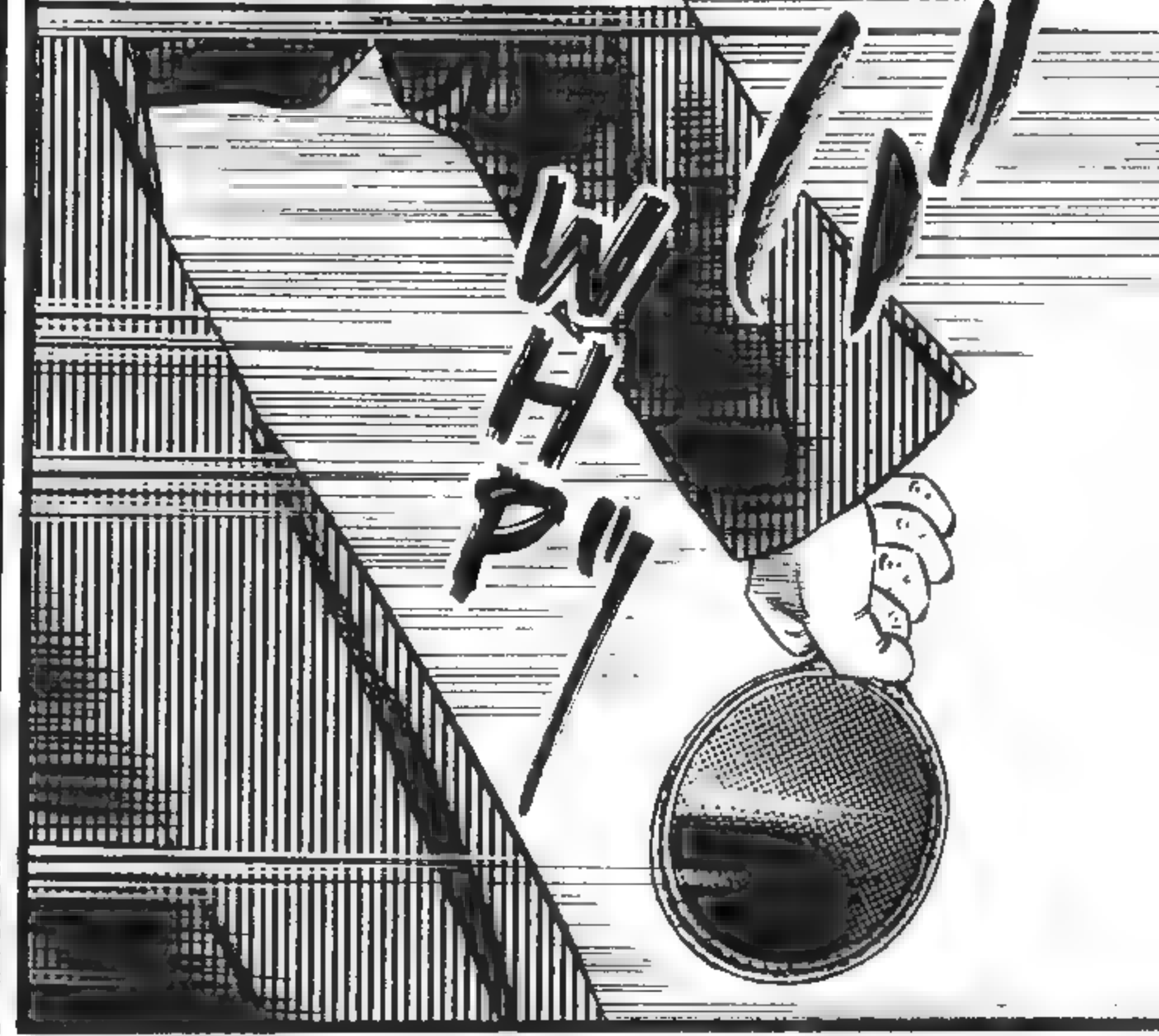
I
MEAN,
YEAH
...



WILL
YOU
GO?

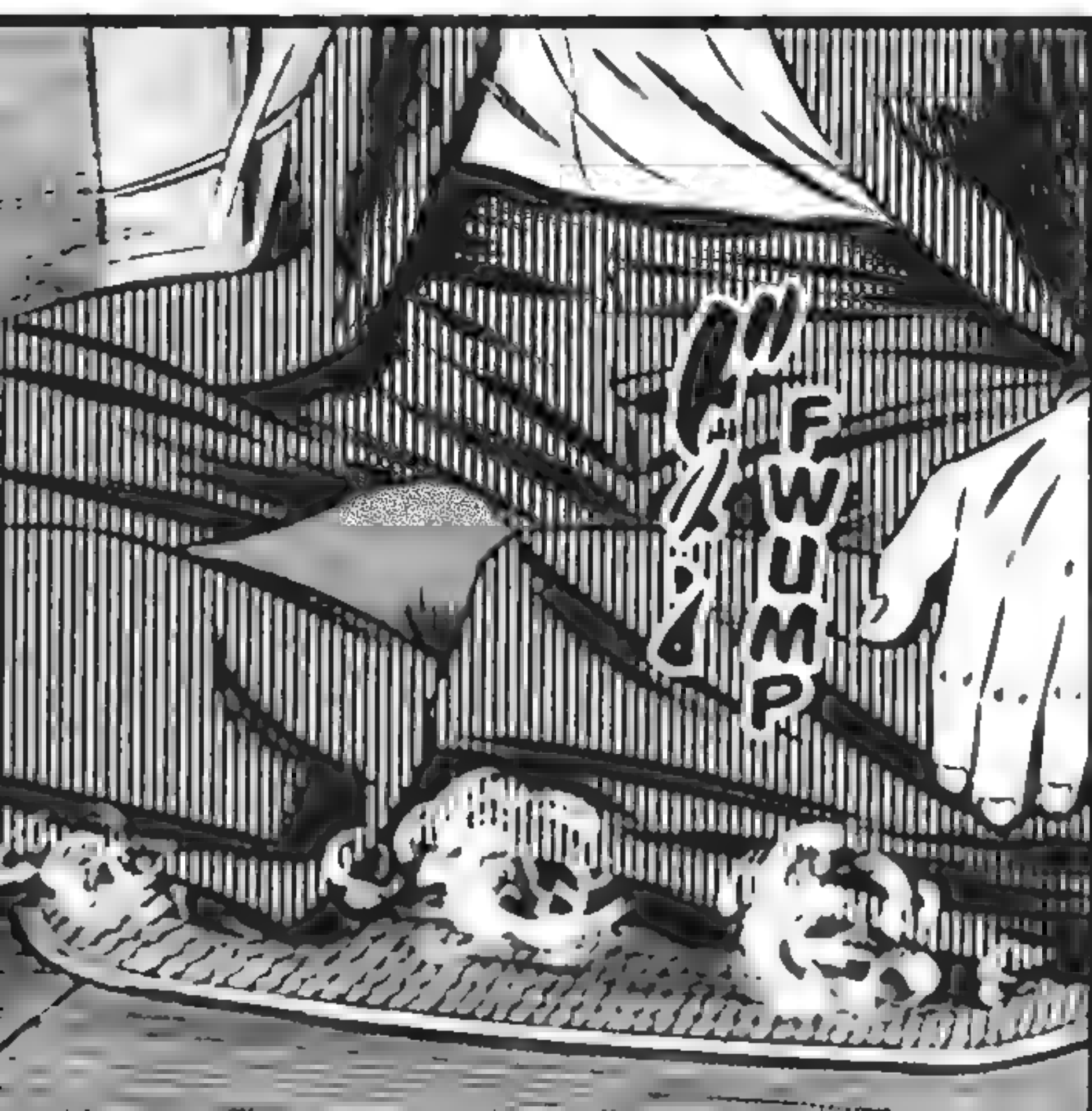
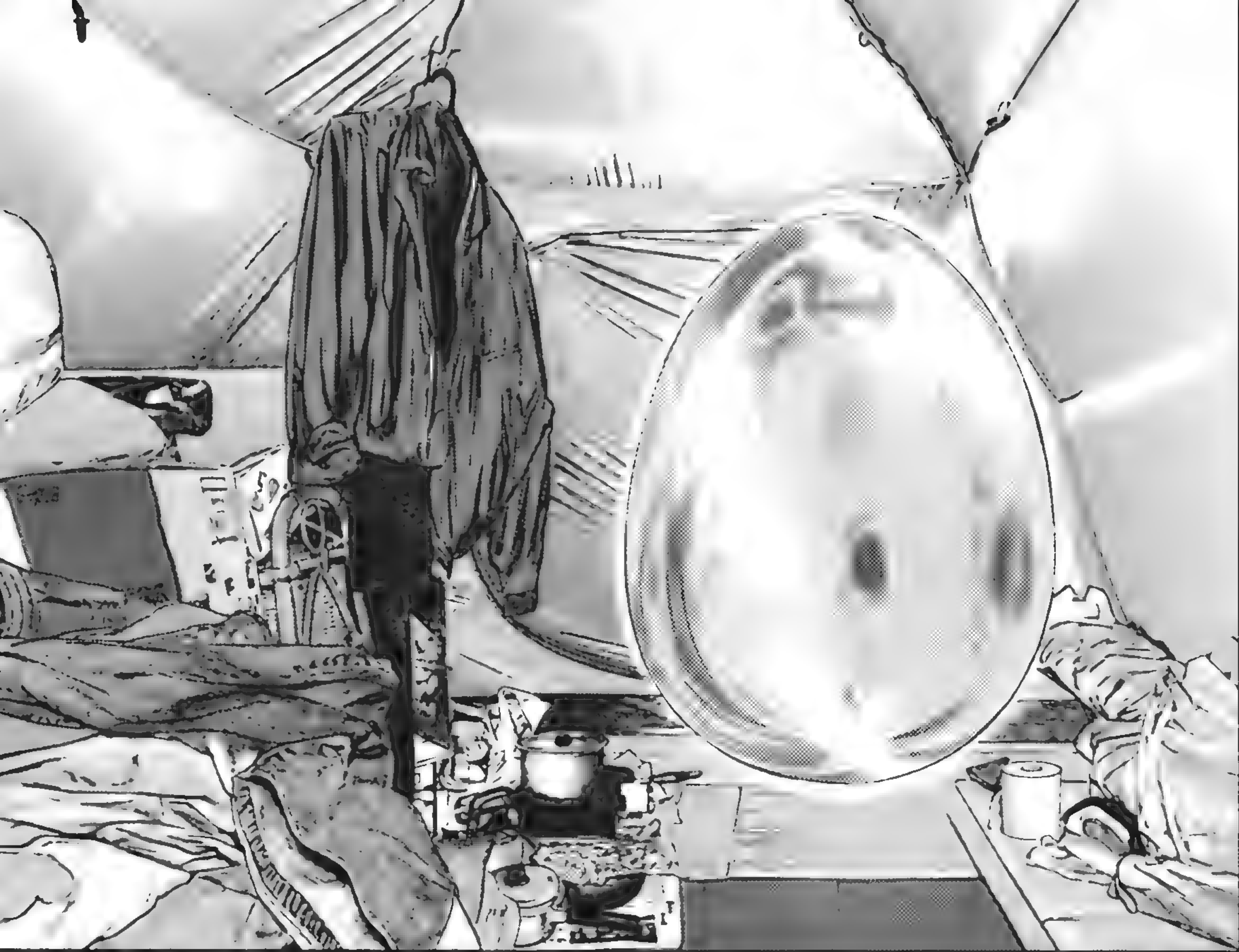


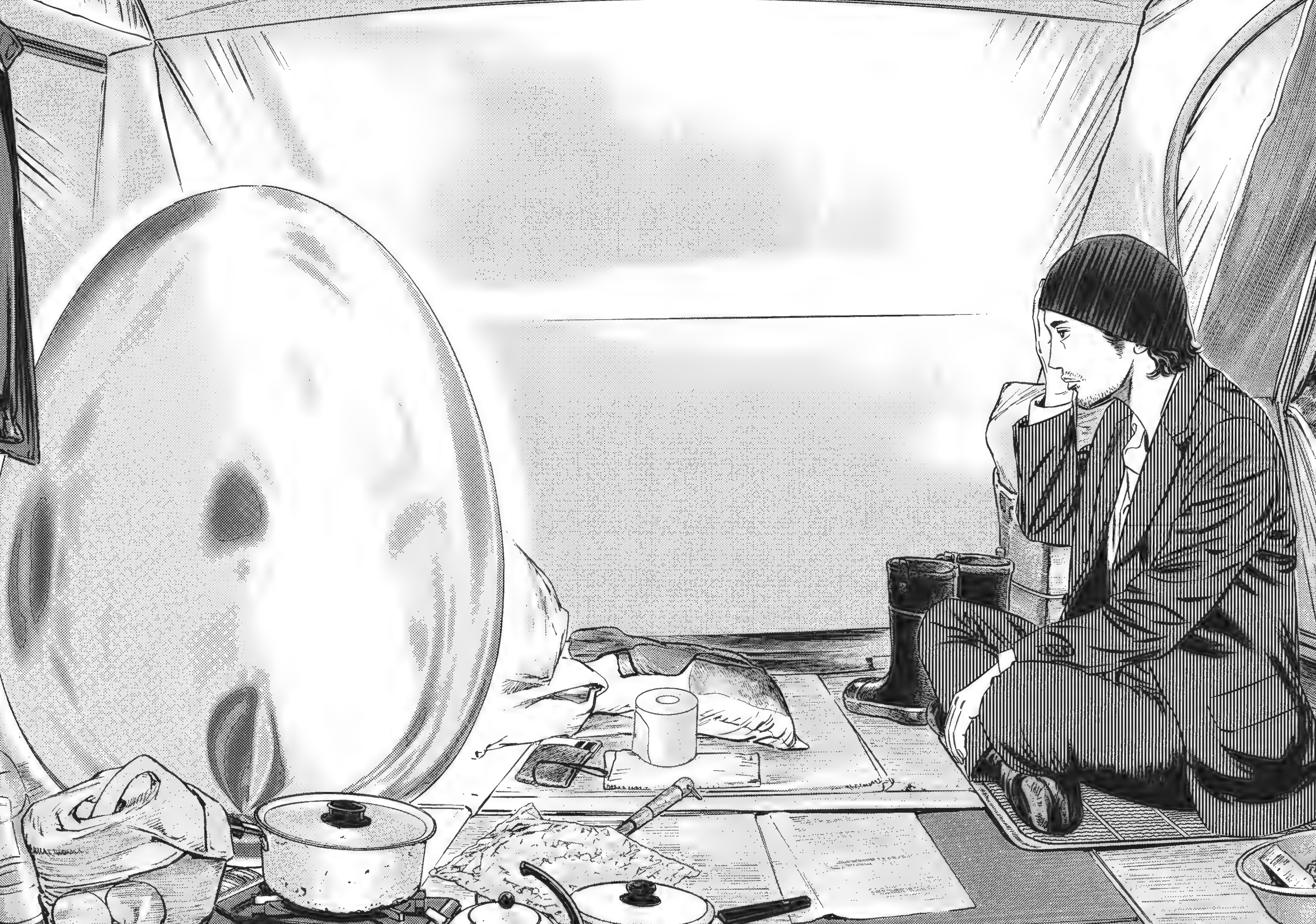
WHERE...

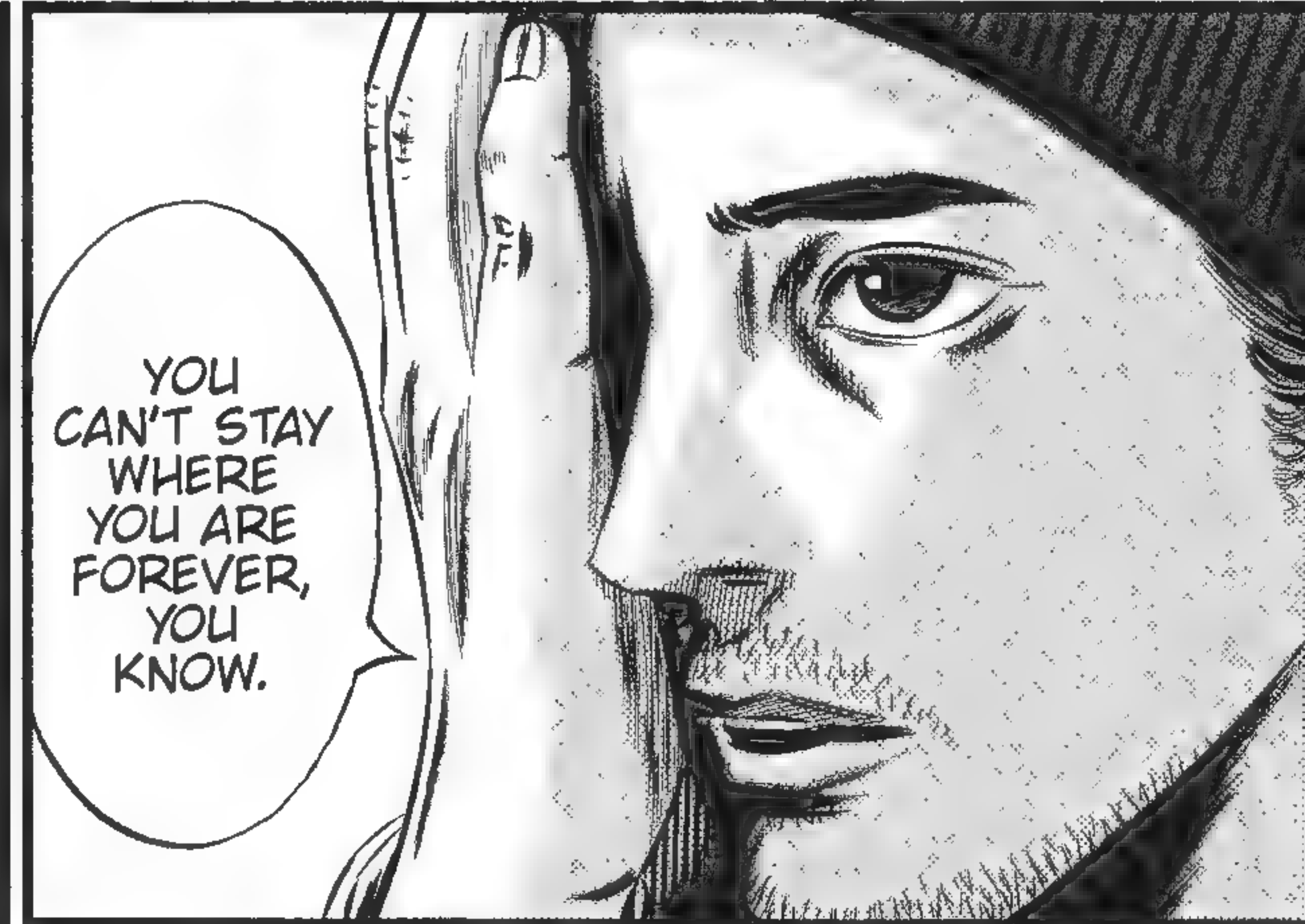
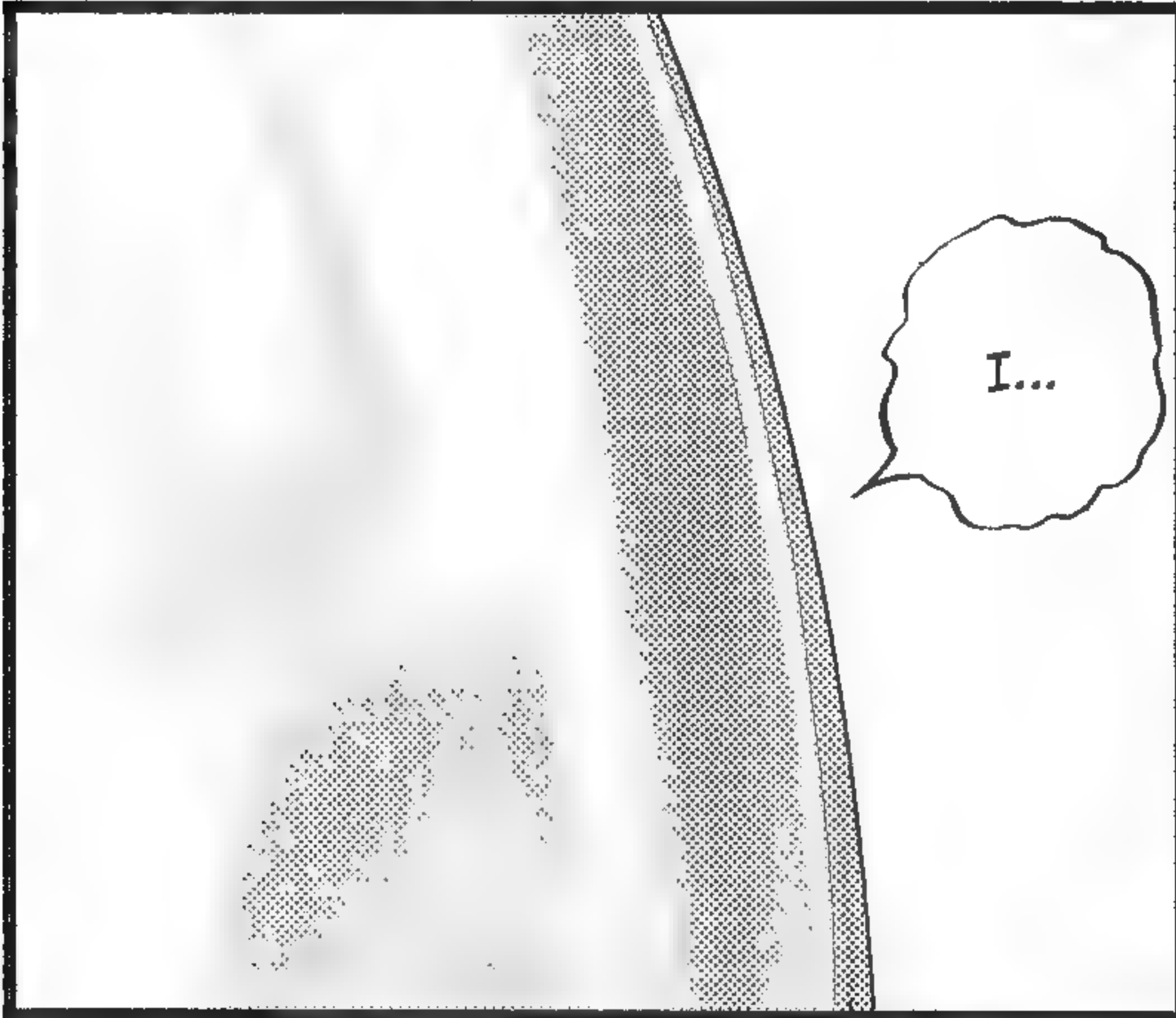














YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
LEAVE THE
PARK...

OR EVEN
YOUR TENT
IF YOU DON'T
WANT TO.

...
?



OF
COURSE
YOU ARE!

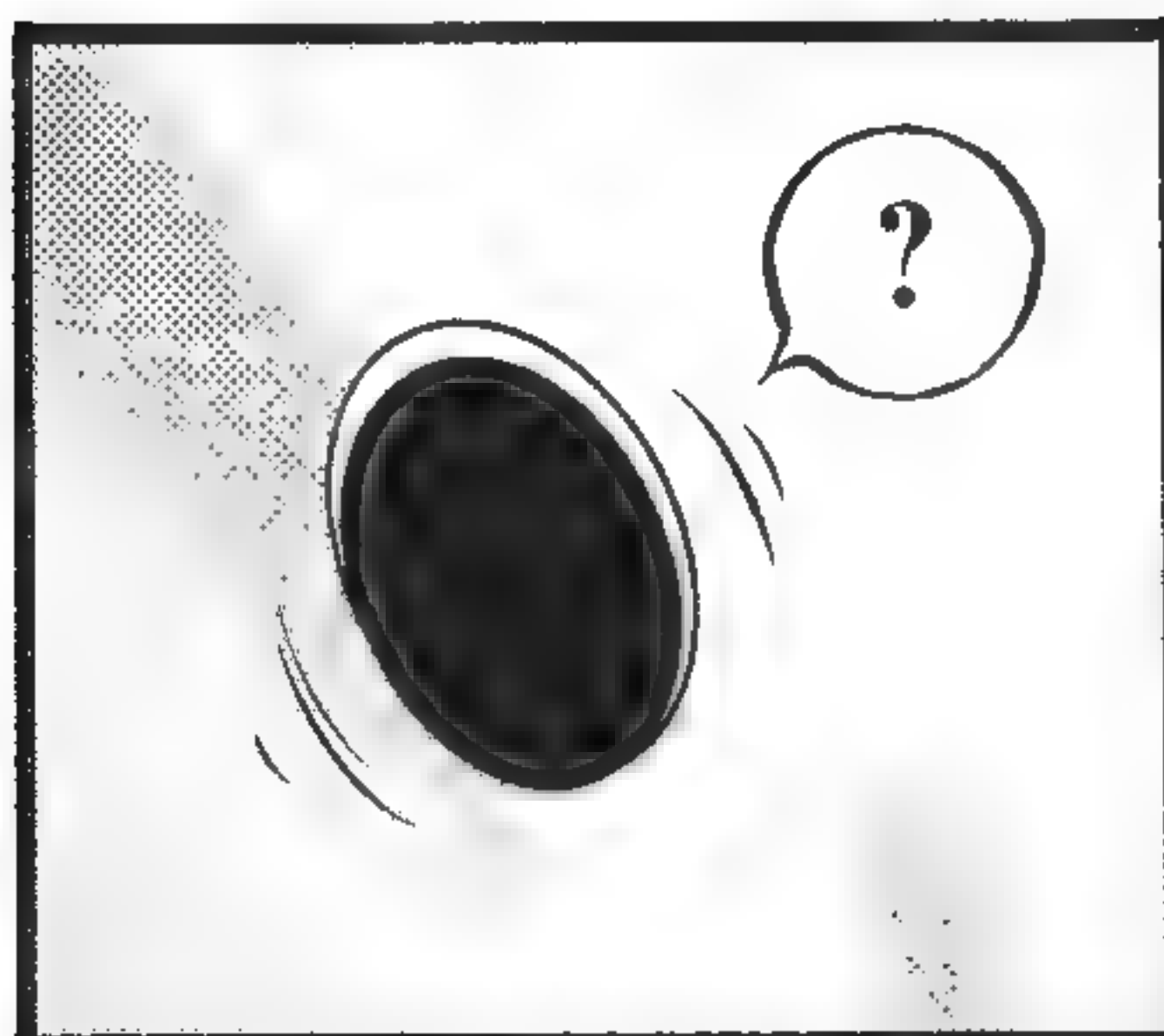
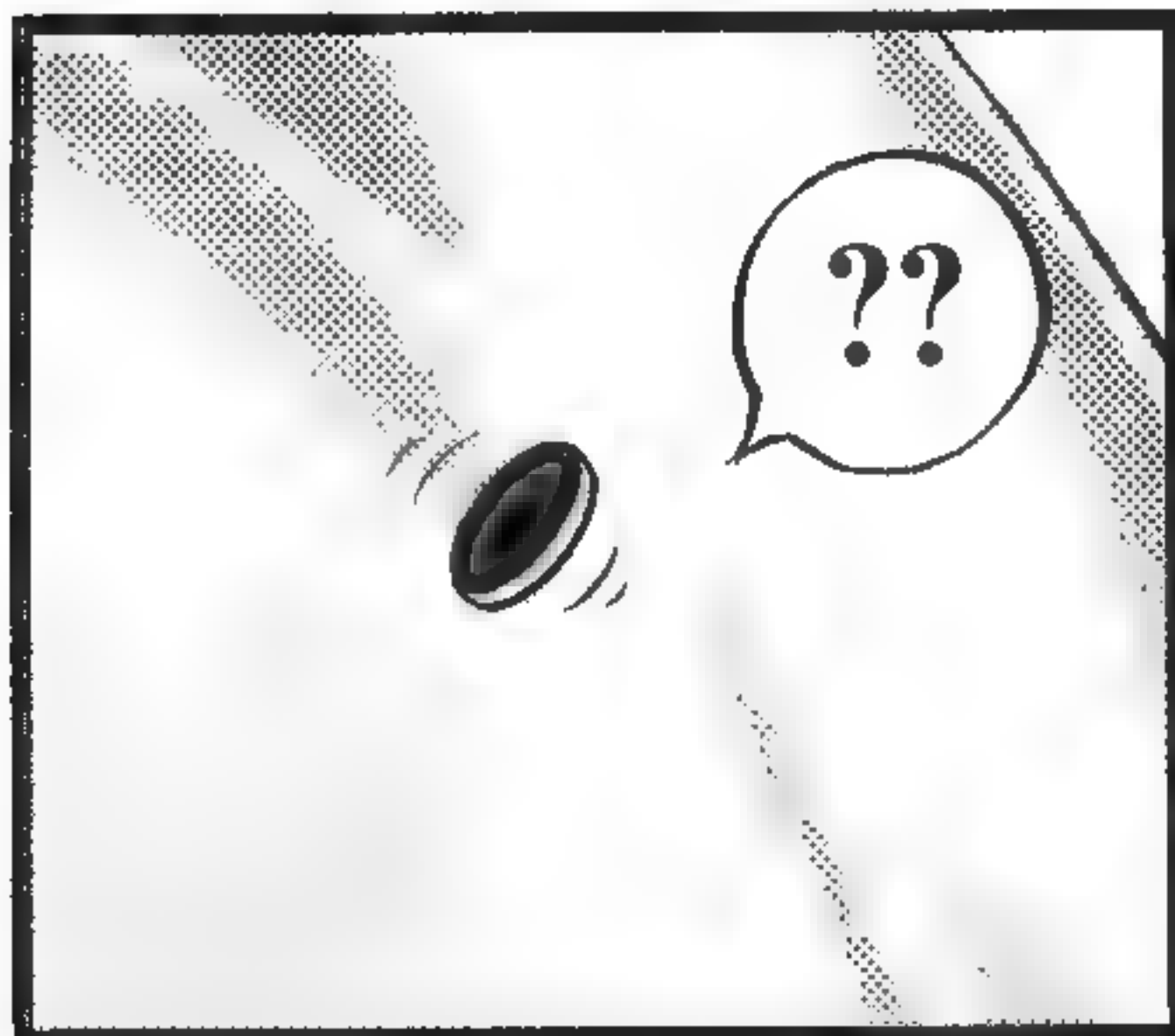
SMILE

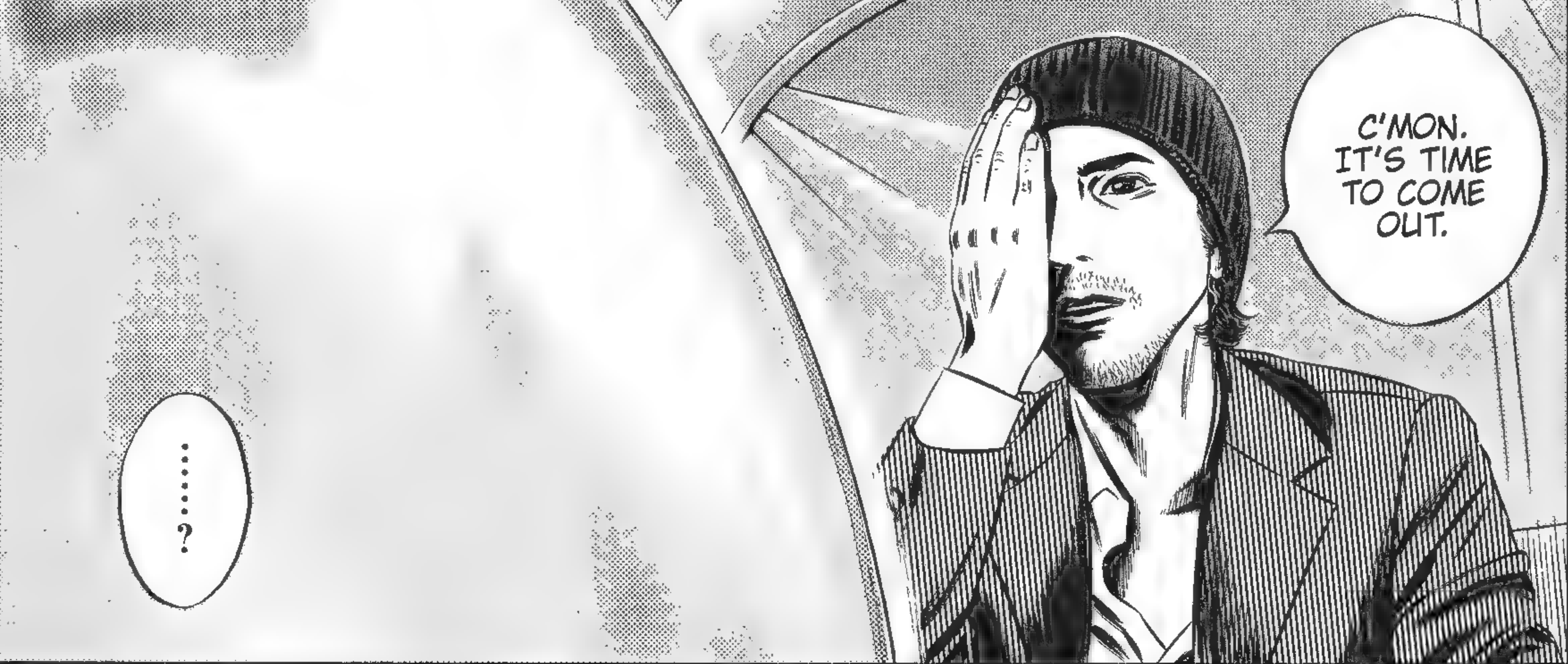


BUT
IT'S TIME
YOU LEFT
YOUR OWN
HEAD.



?!





C'MON.
IT'S TIME
TO COME
OUT.

.....
?



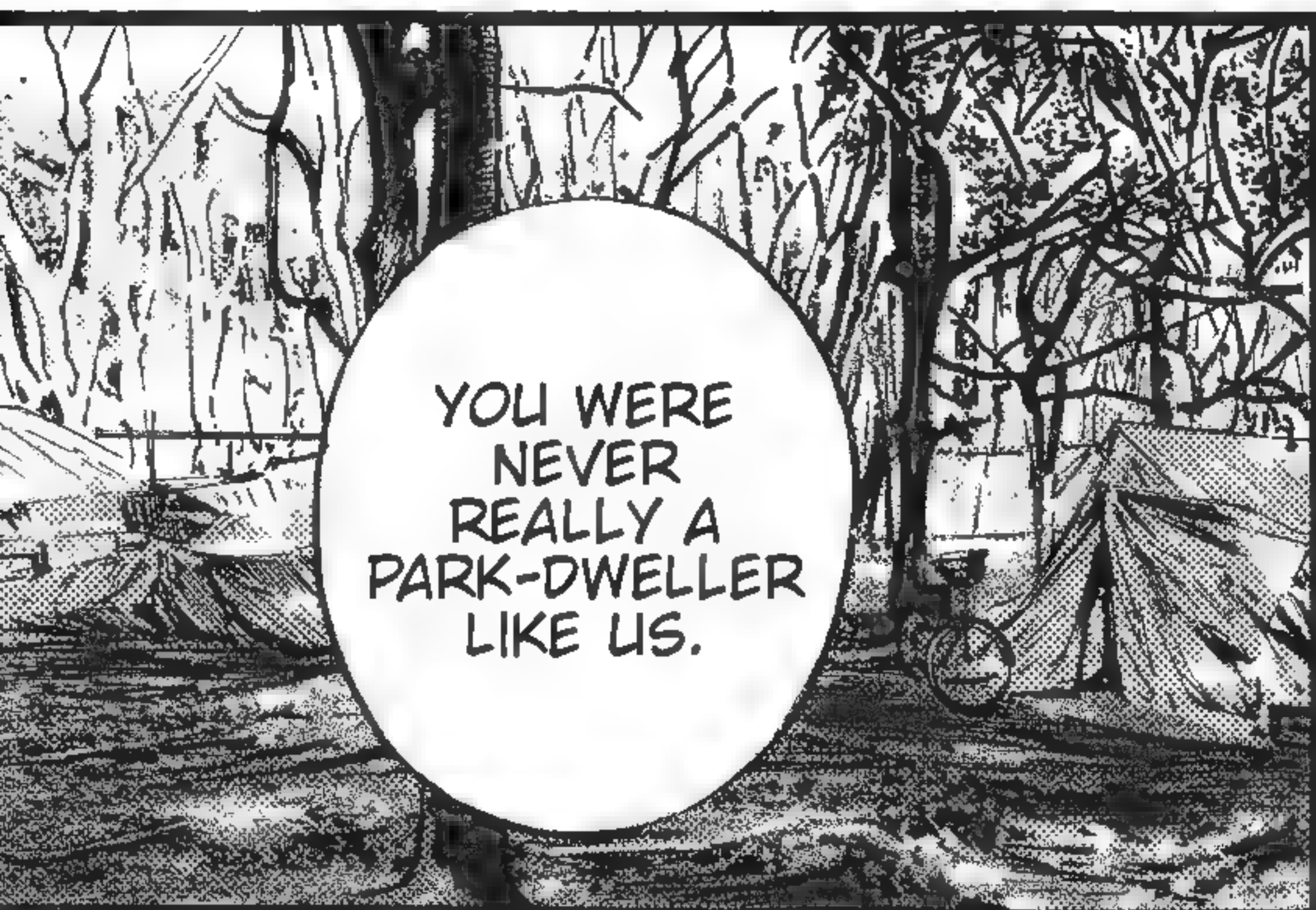
WHERE
...?



AND GO
WHERE,
HUH?

COME
OUT?

OH
YEAH?



YOU WERE
NEVER
REALLY A
PARK-DWELLER
LIKE US.



YOU ALWAYS
KEPT ONE FOOT
ON THE OTHER
SIDE, LIVING
OUTTA THAT CAR.
HALF IN AND HALF
OUT. YOU DAMN
COWARD.



YOU
DON'T
GET IT.

HOW COULD
YOU? YOU'VE
STILL GOT A
HOME.

!



THIS WHOLE
THING'S JUST
A GAME TO
YOU.



YOU CAN GO
HOME ANY DAMN
TIME YOU WANT,
RIGHT?



AGAIN
WITH
THE TALL
TALES.

HA!

IT'S
NOT. I...

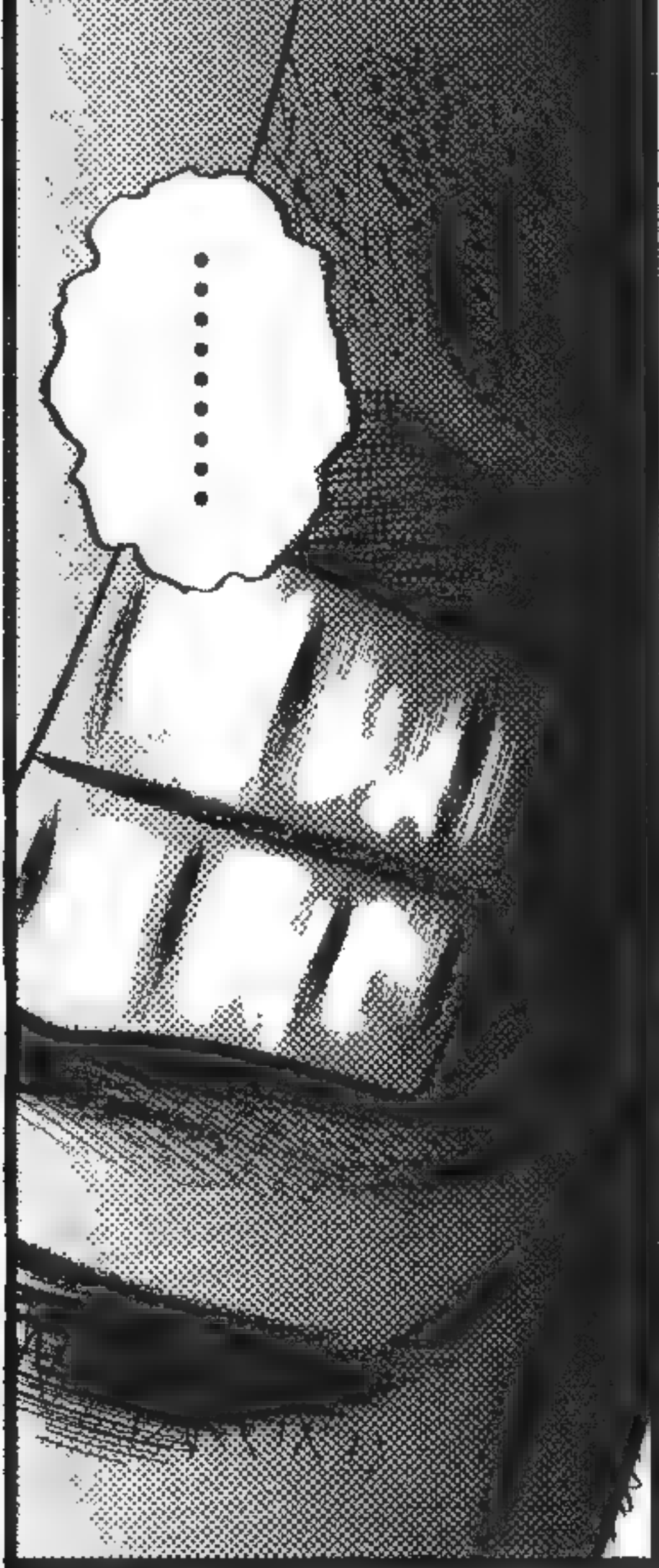
I DON'T
HAVE ANY-
WHERE TO
GO BACK TO
EITHER.



MY PRIVATELY
HELD STOCKS AND
INVESTMENTS,
MY SAVINGS, MY
APARTMENT...
THEY'RE ALL
GONE. I'VE GOT
NOWHERE TO LIVE.

I MADE A
HUGE MISTAKE AT
WORK. SOMETHING
SO BAD THEY
WANTED ME GONE.
I FINALLY GAVE IN
AND TURNED IN
MY LETTER OF
RESIGNATION THE
OTHER DAY.





.....



DO I
LOOK LIKE
I'VE GOT
FRIENDS?

YOU'VE GOTTA
HAVE A FRIEND
YOU COULD
CRASH WITH,
OR...

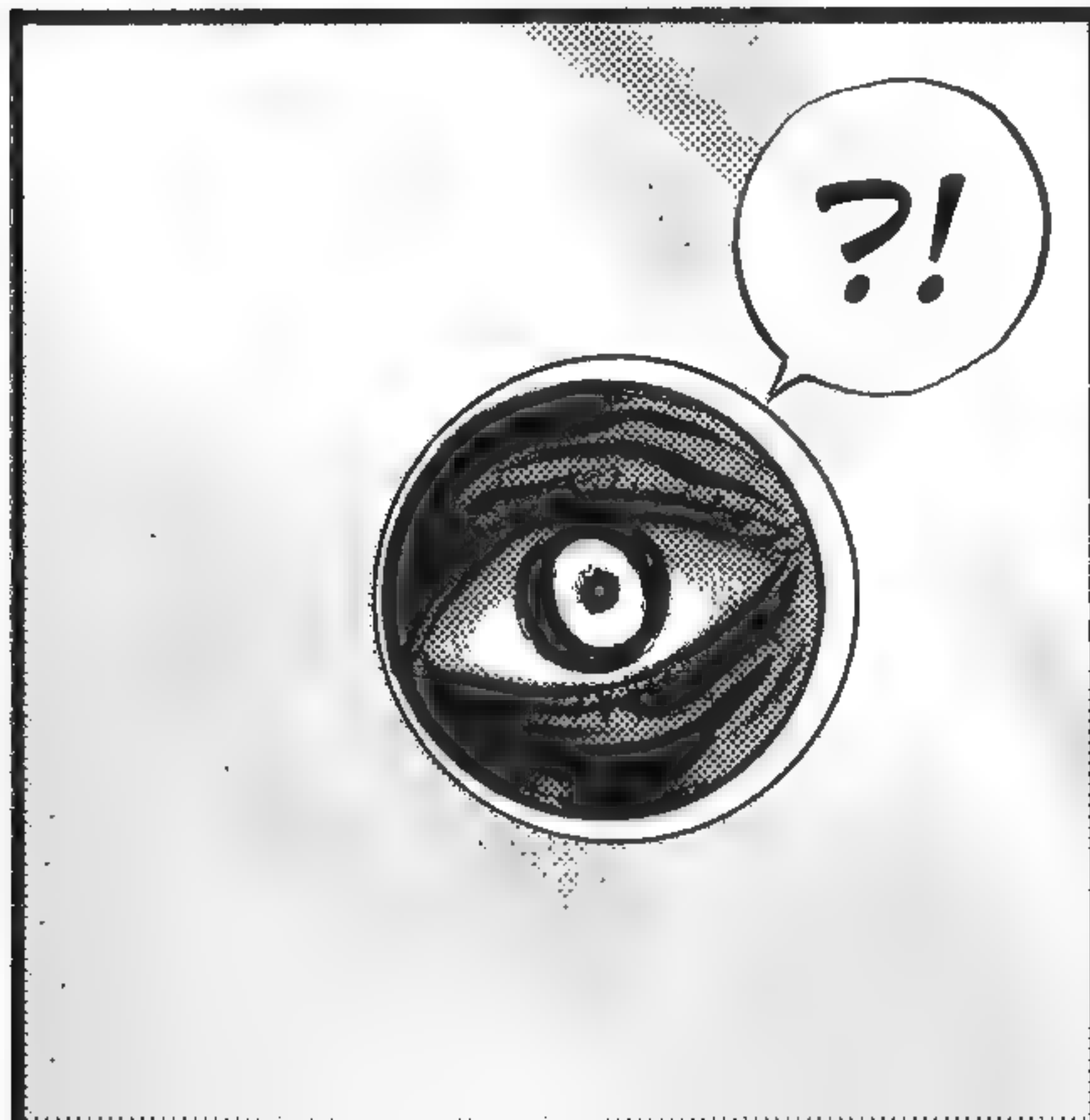


PUH! SURE. AS
IF ANYTHING
YOU SAY IS
TRUSTWORTHY.



EVERYONE
AROUND
ME...

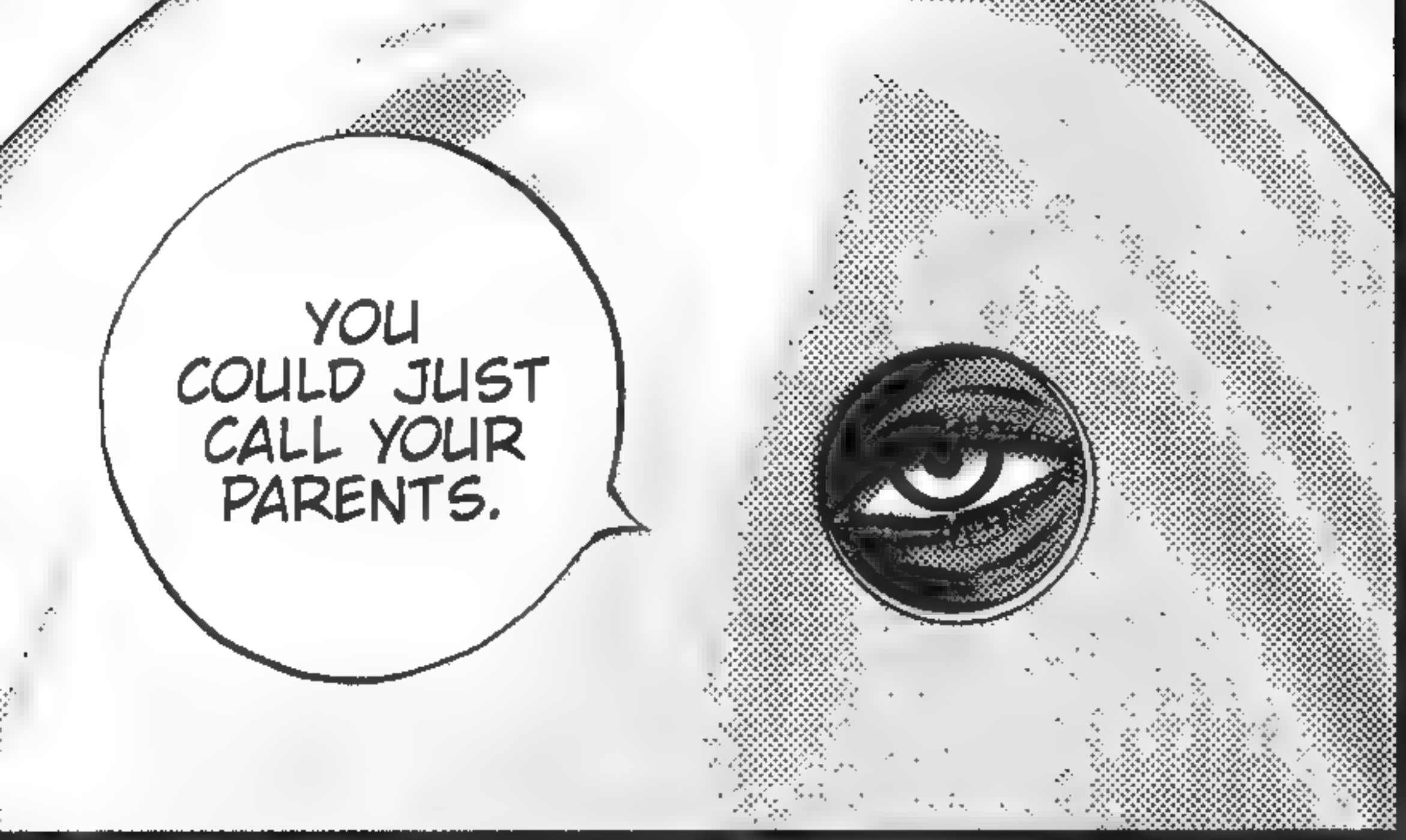
THE SECOND
I LOST MY
JOB AND
ALL MY
MONEY...



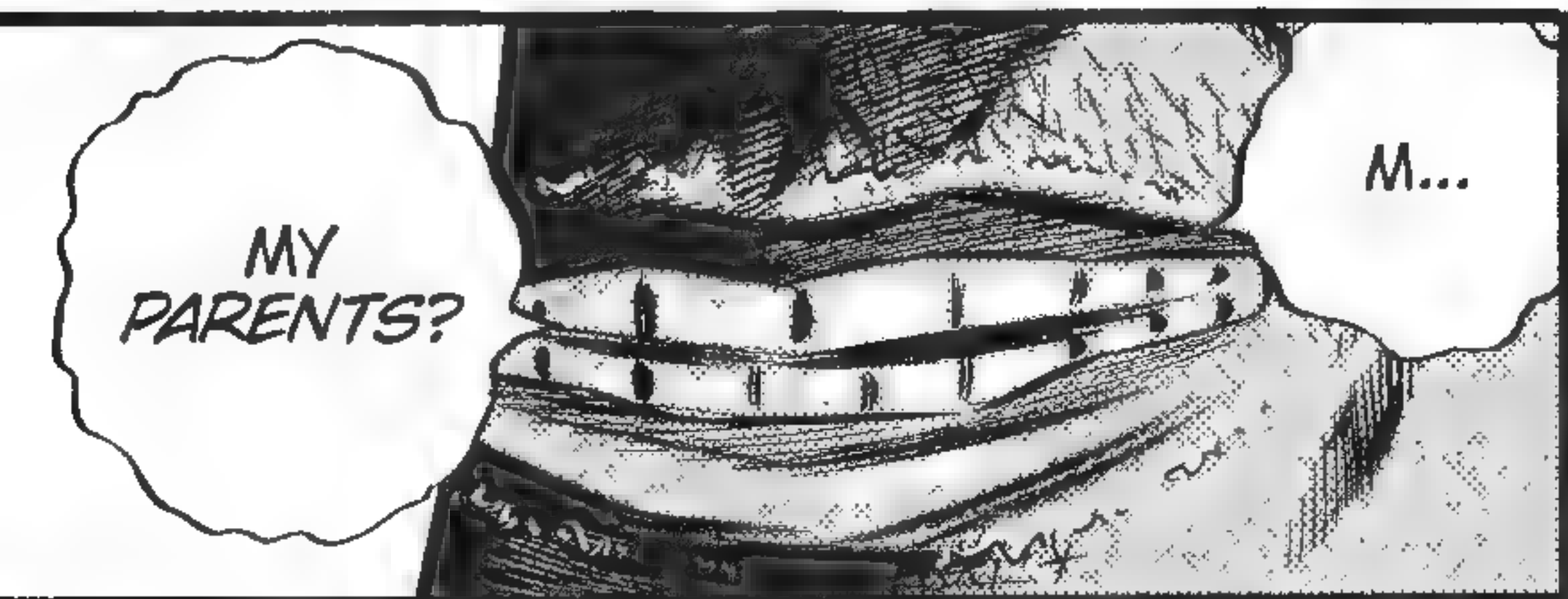
?!



THEY DONE
LEFT ME
HIGH AN'
DRY!



YOU
COULD JUST
CALL YOUR
PARENTS.



MY
PARENTS?

M...



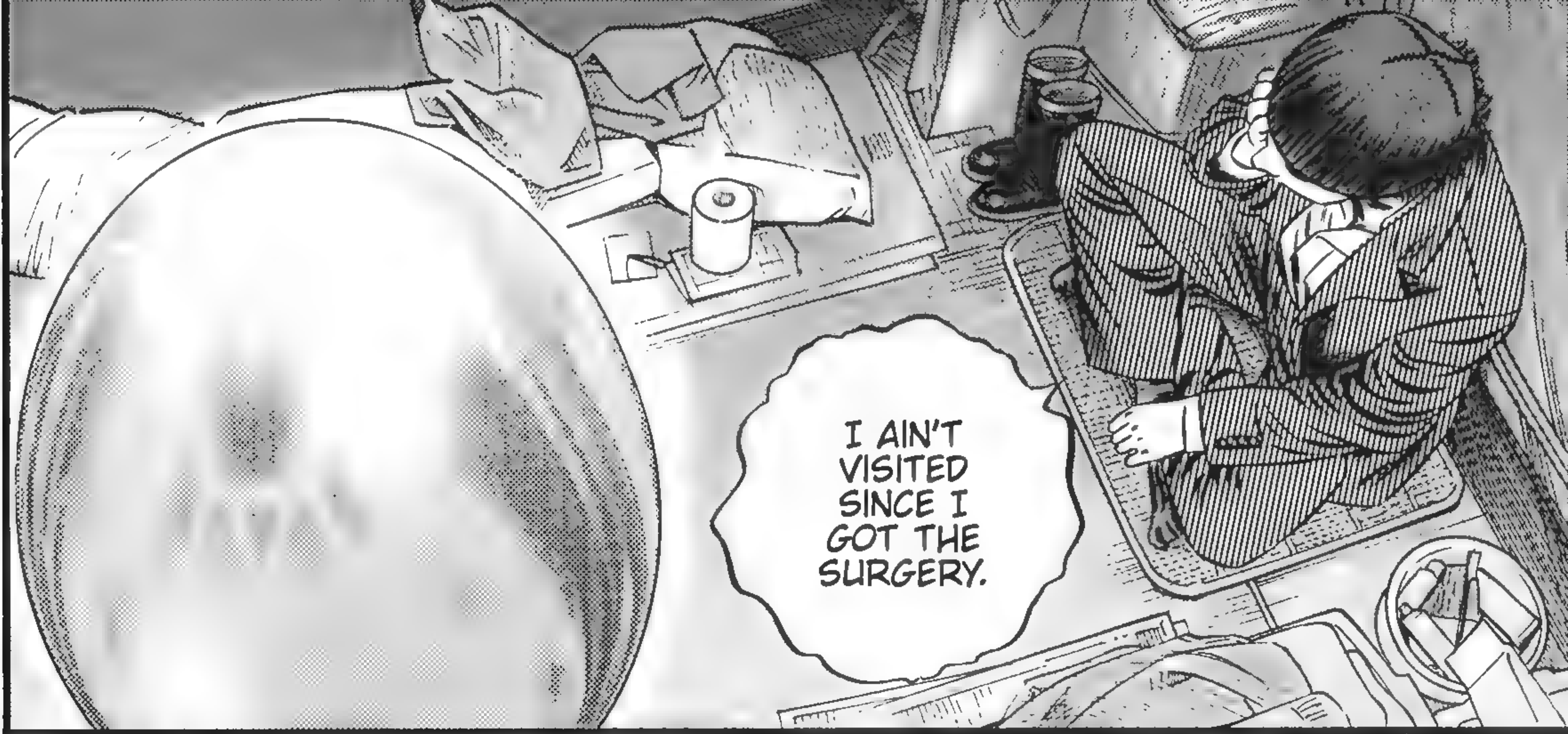
THERE'S
NO ONE I
CAN RELY
ON.



ARE YOU
KIDDIN'?! I
CAN'T GO
BACK TO
'EM NOW!!



!



I AIN'T
VISITED
SINCE I
GOT THE
SURGERY.



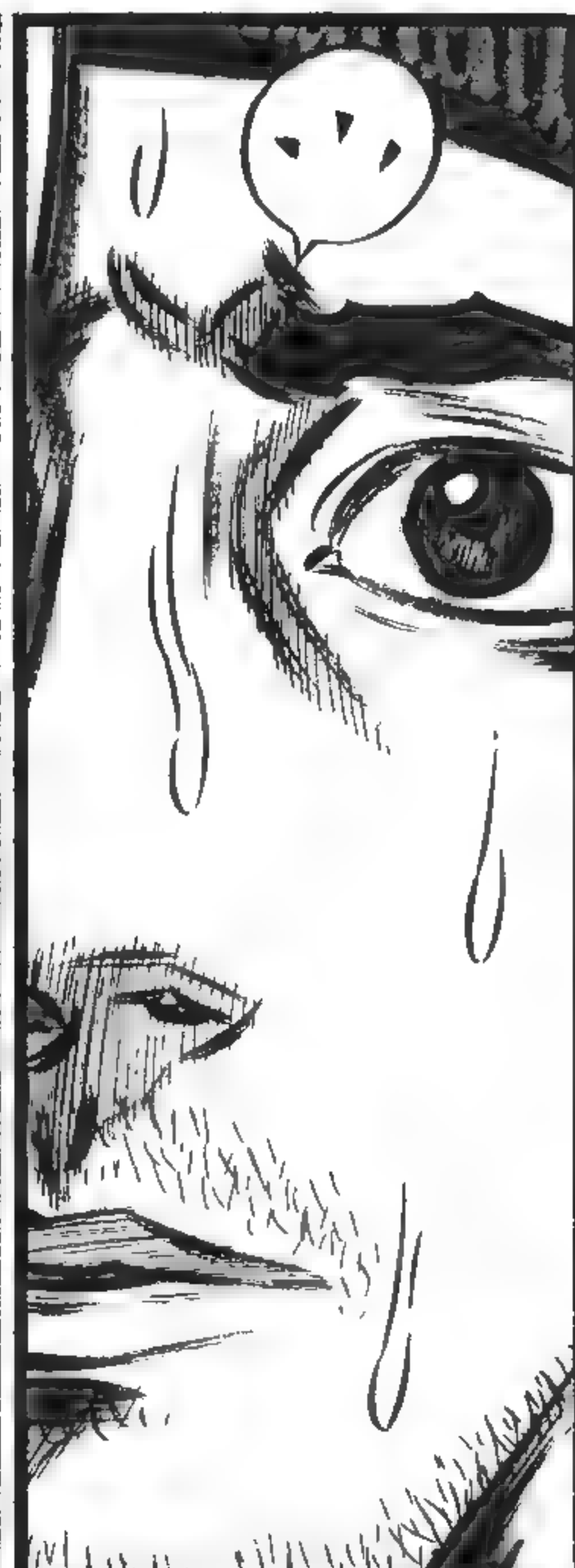
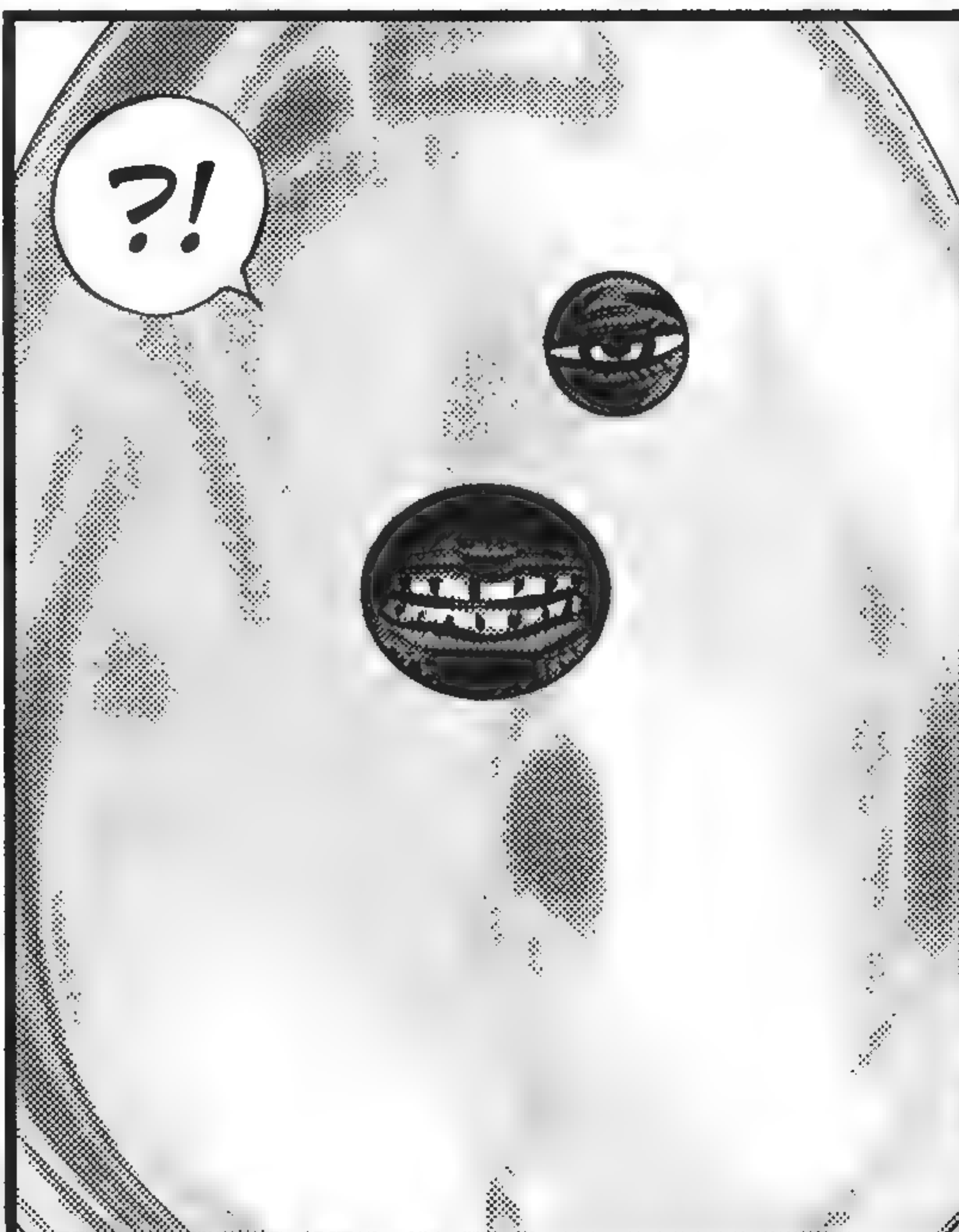
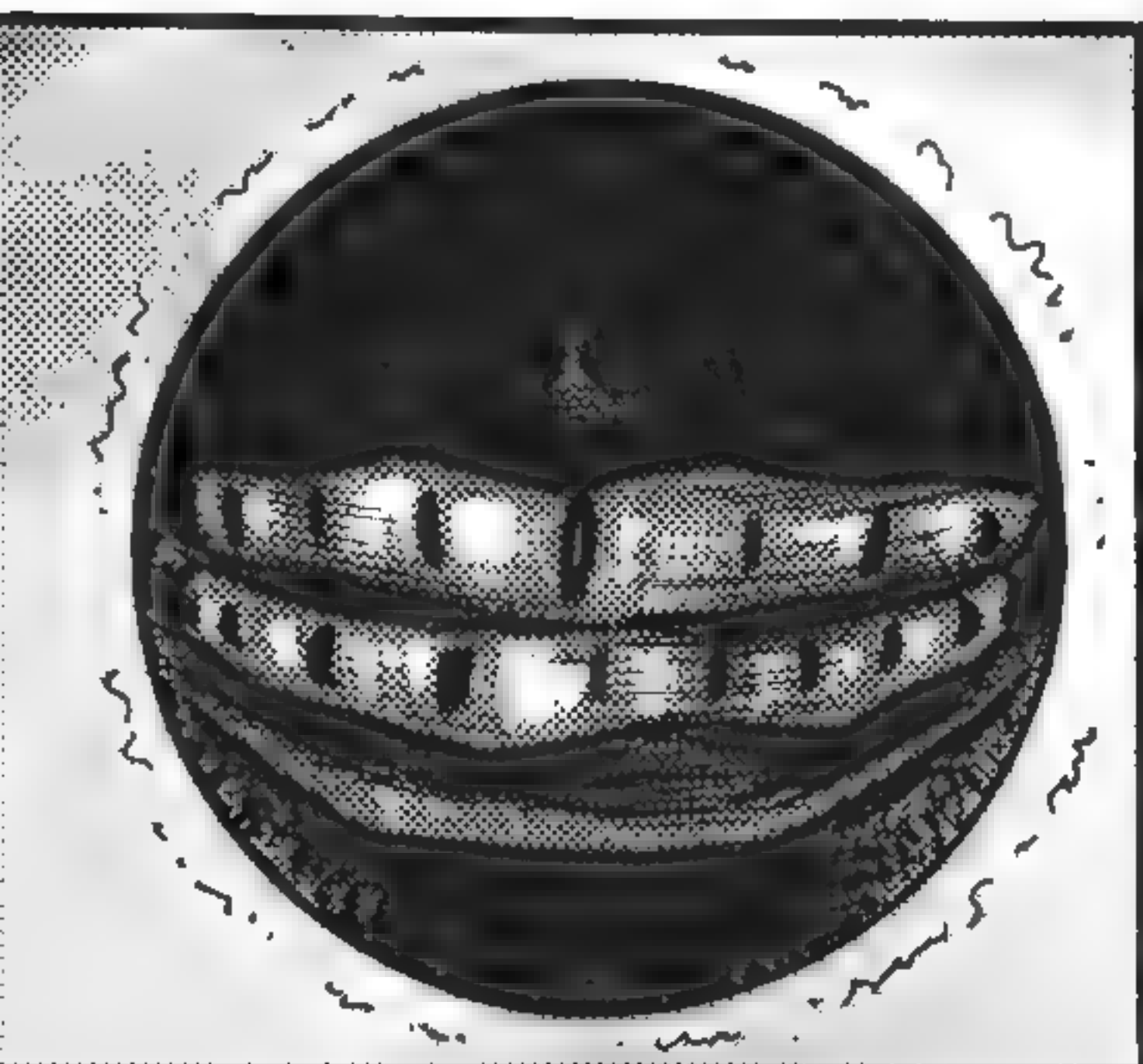
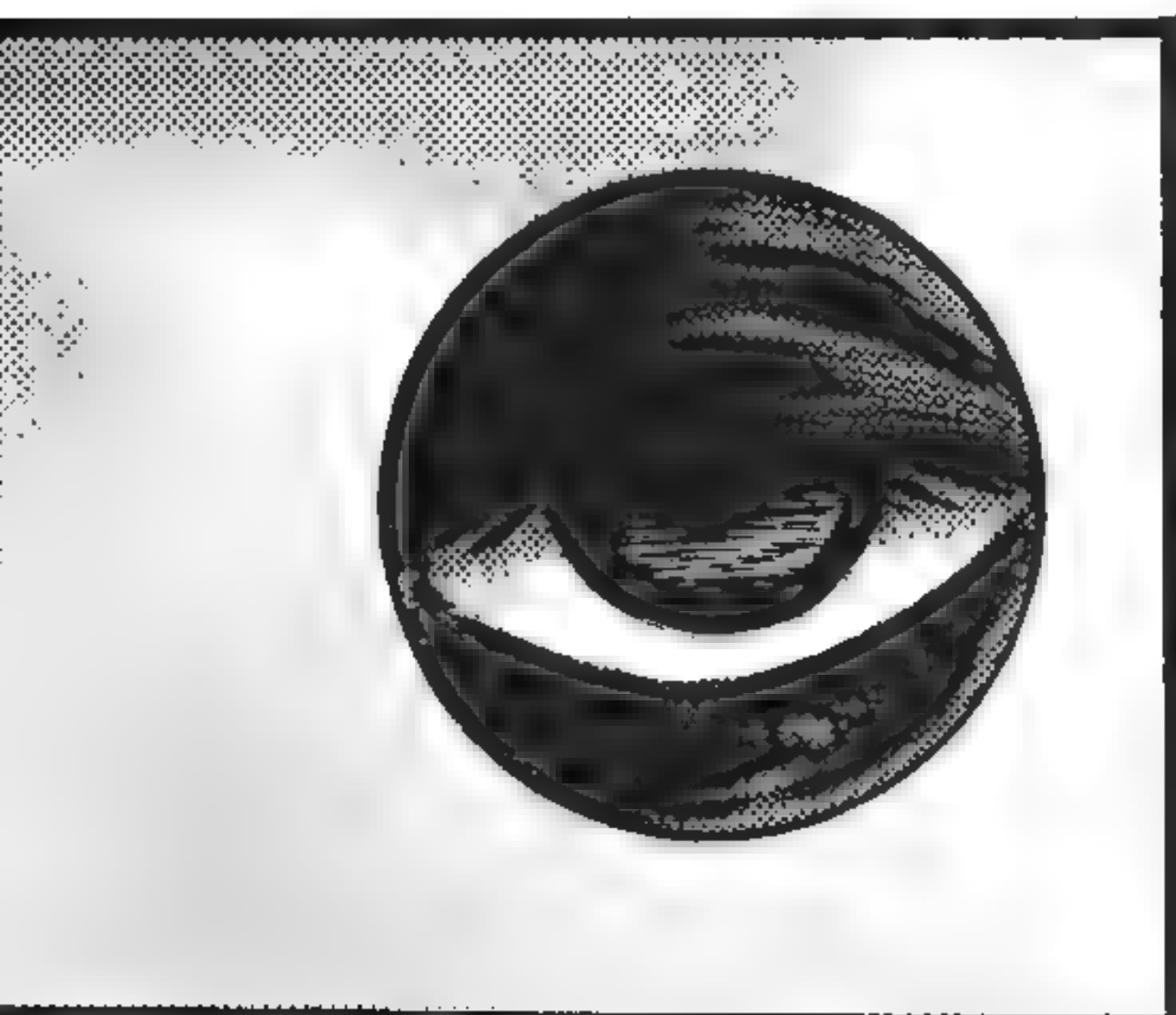
AN' THE
WHOLE TIME,
I NEVER
SENT 'EM ANY
PICTURES
OF ME,
NEITHER...

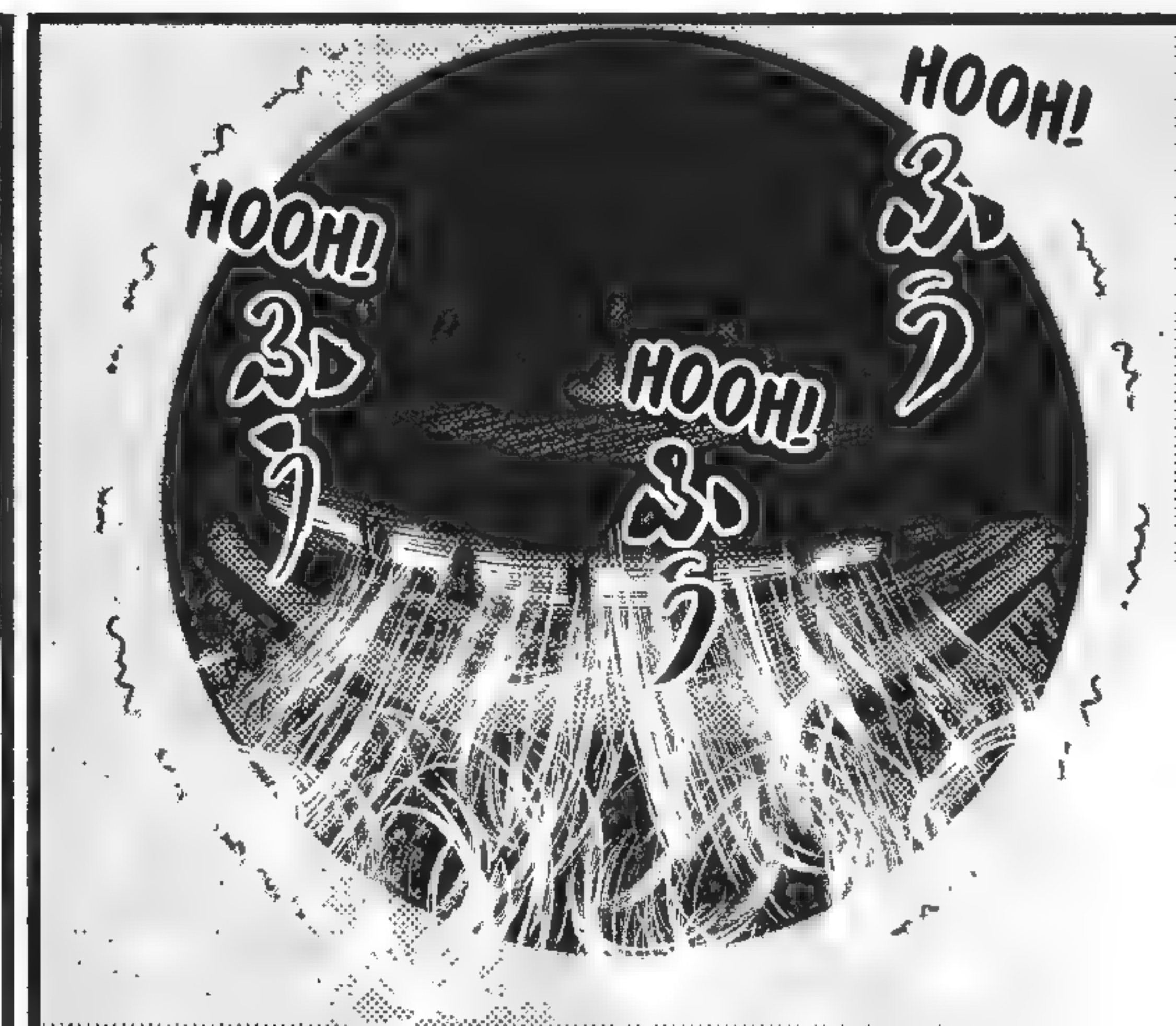
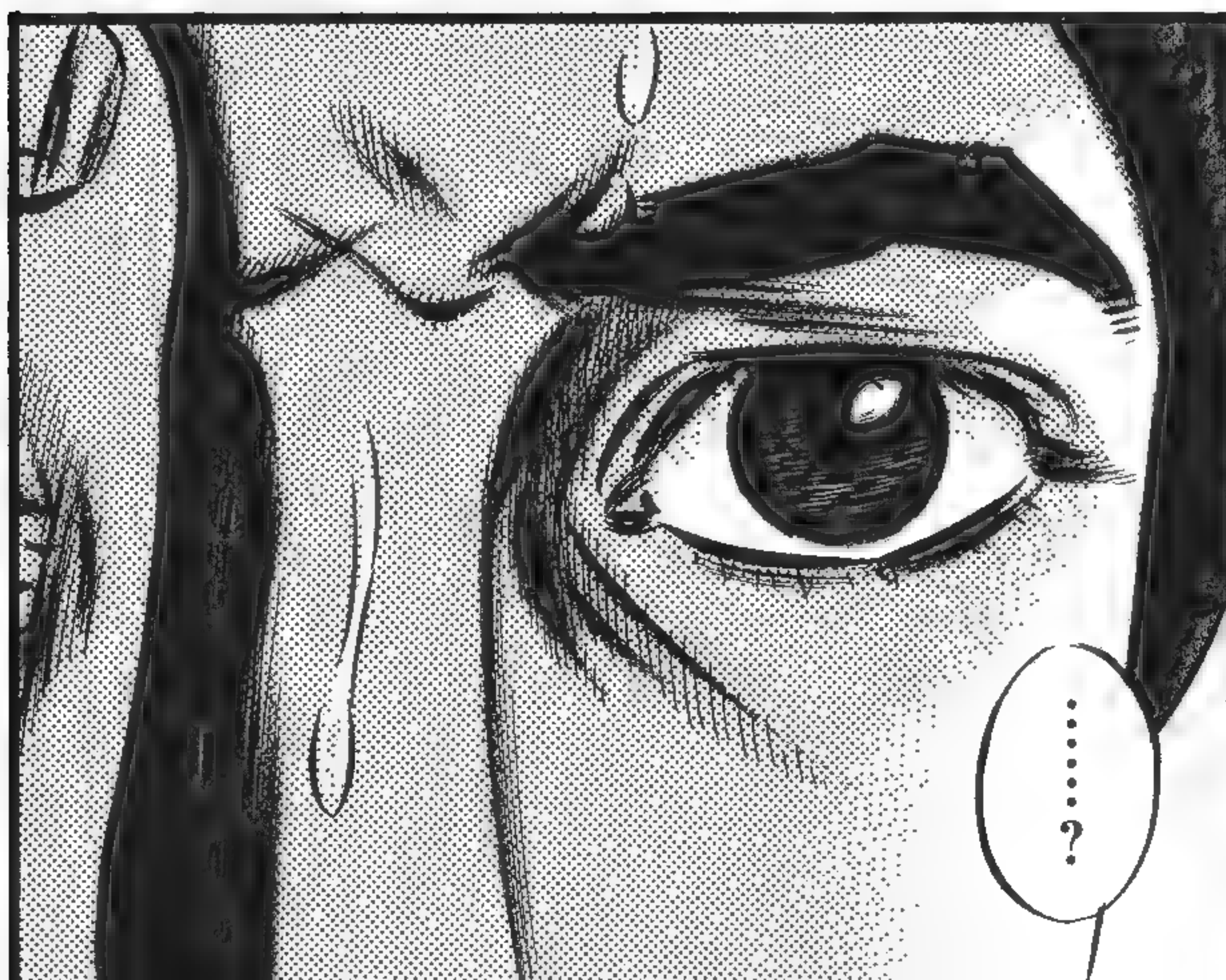
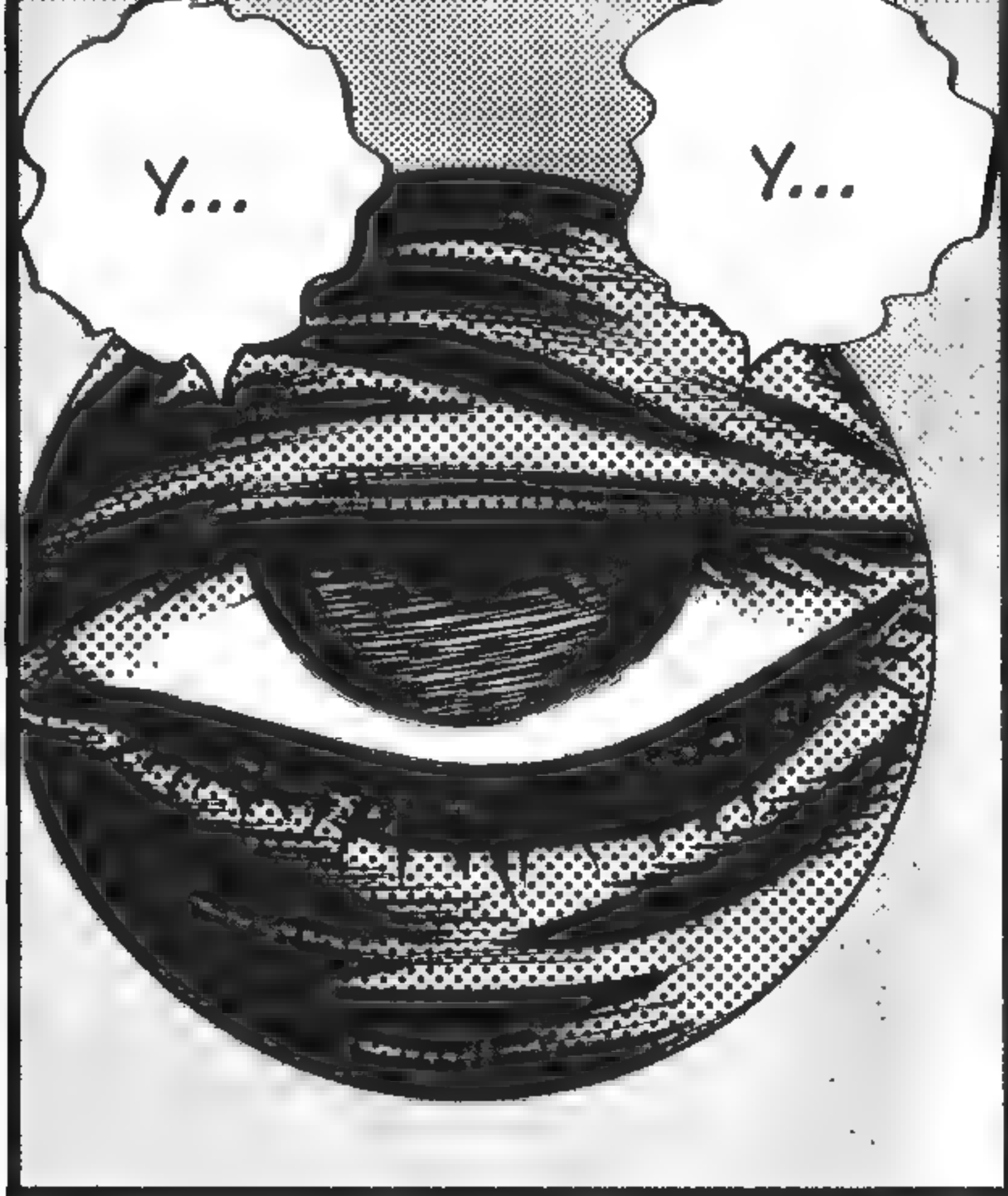
I AIN'T EVEN
SEEN 'EM
FER ALMOST
FOURTEEN
YEARS.

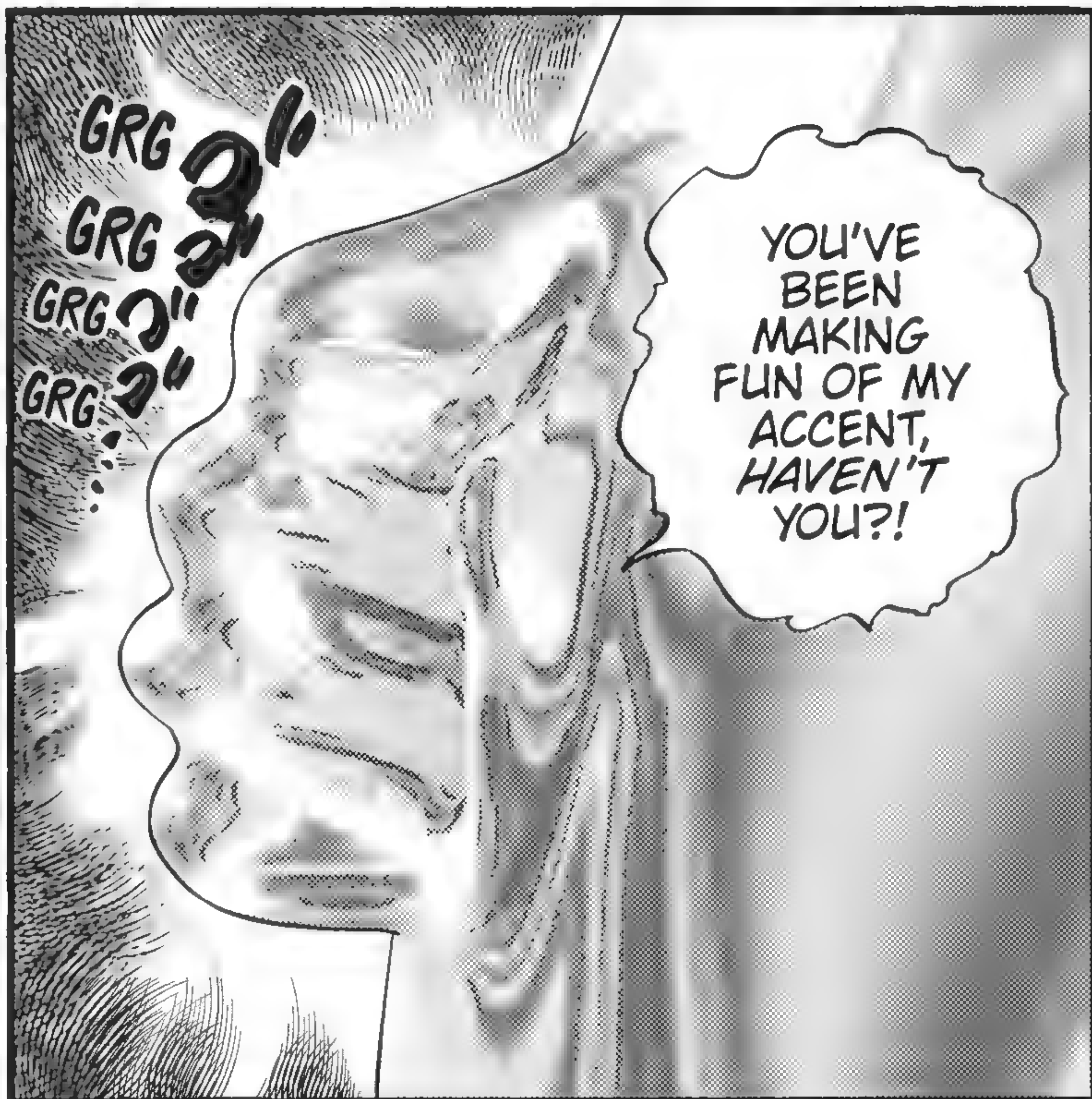
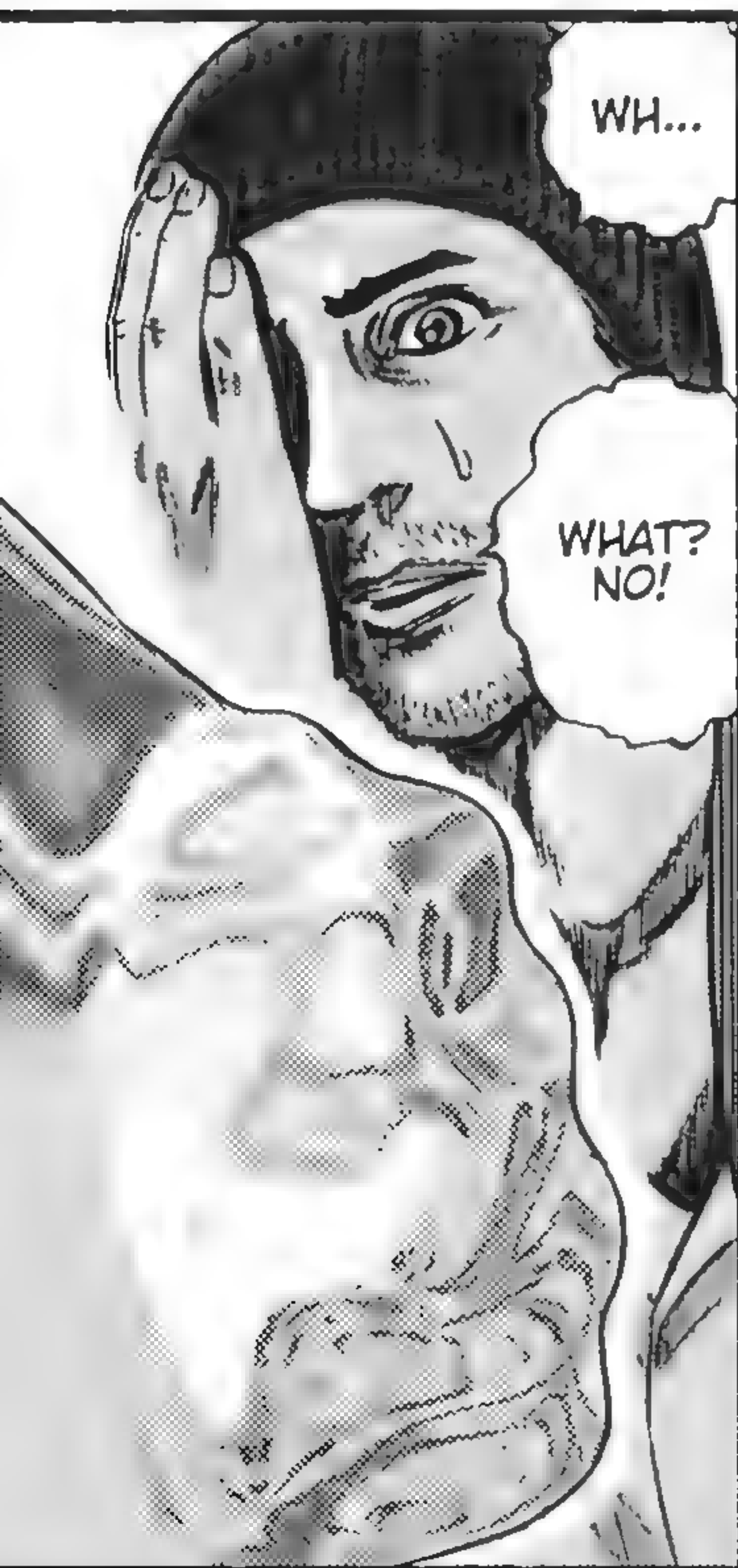
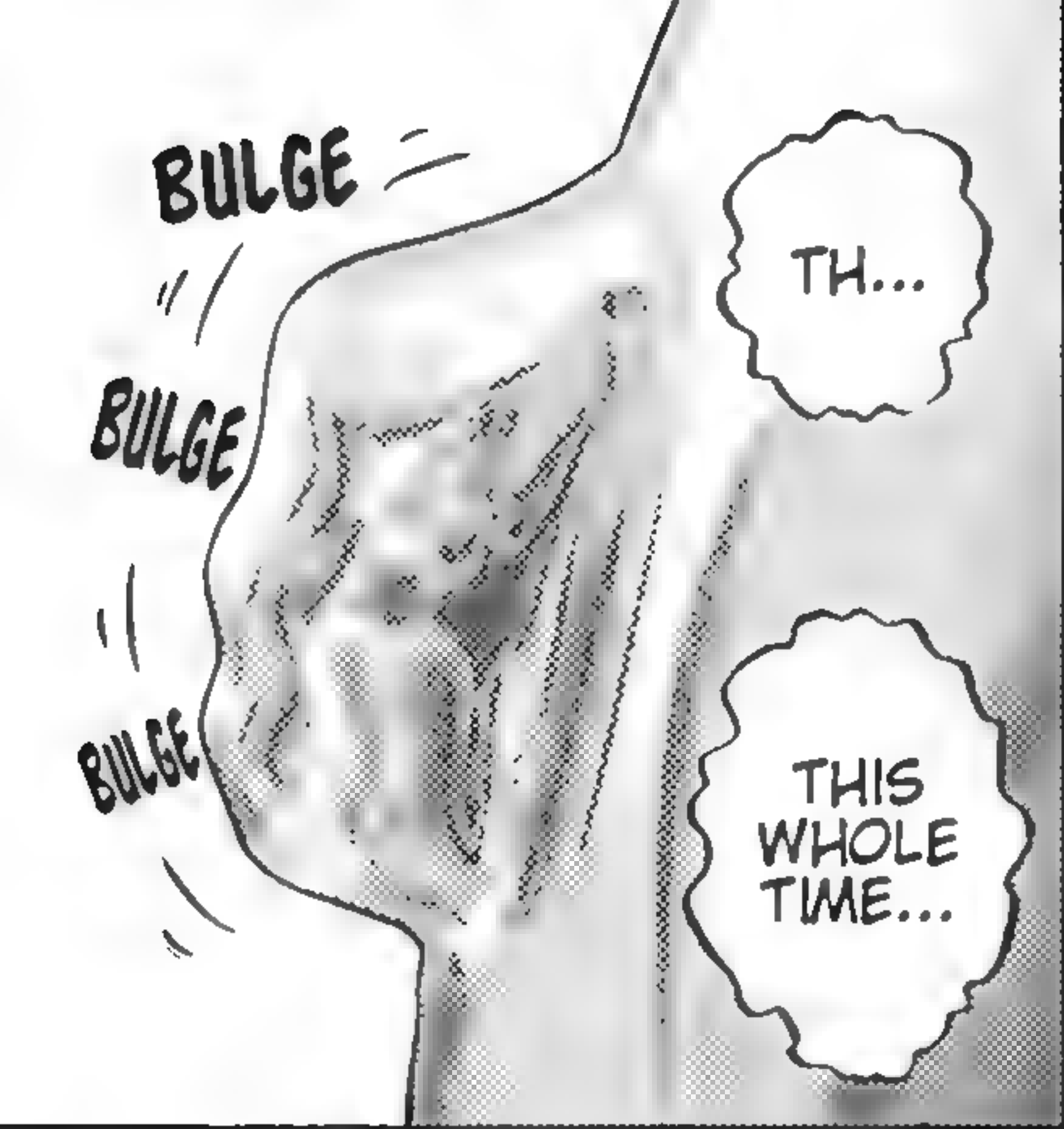


THEY
WOULDN'T
KNOW WHO
THE HELL
I WAS!!

EVEN IF
I WENT
BACK NOW,
WITH THIS
UNFAMILIAR
FACE...







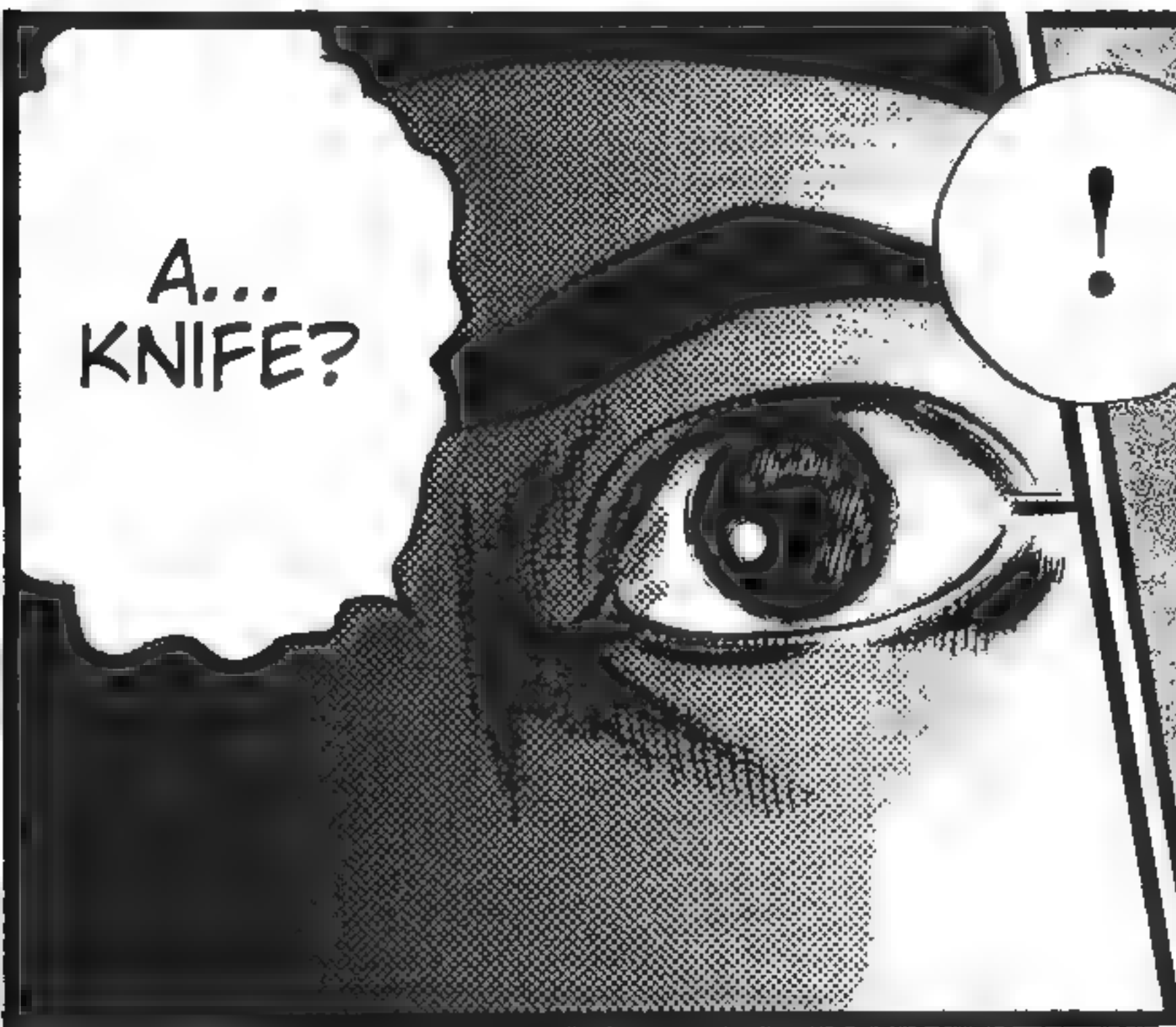


I AIN'T
LYIN'!

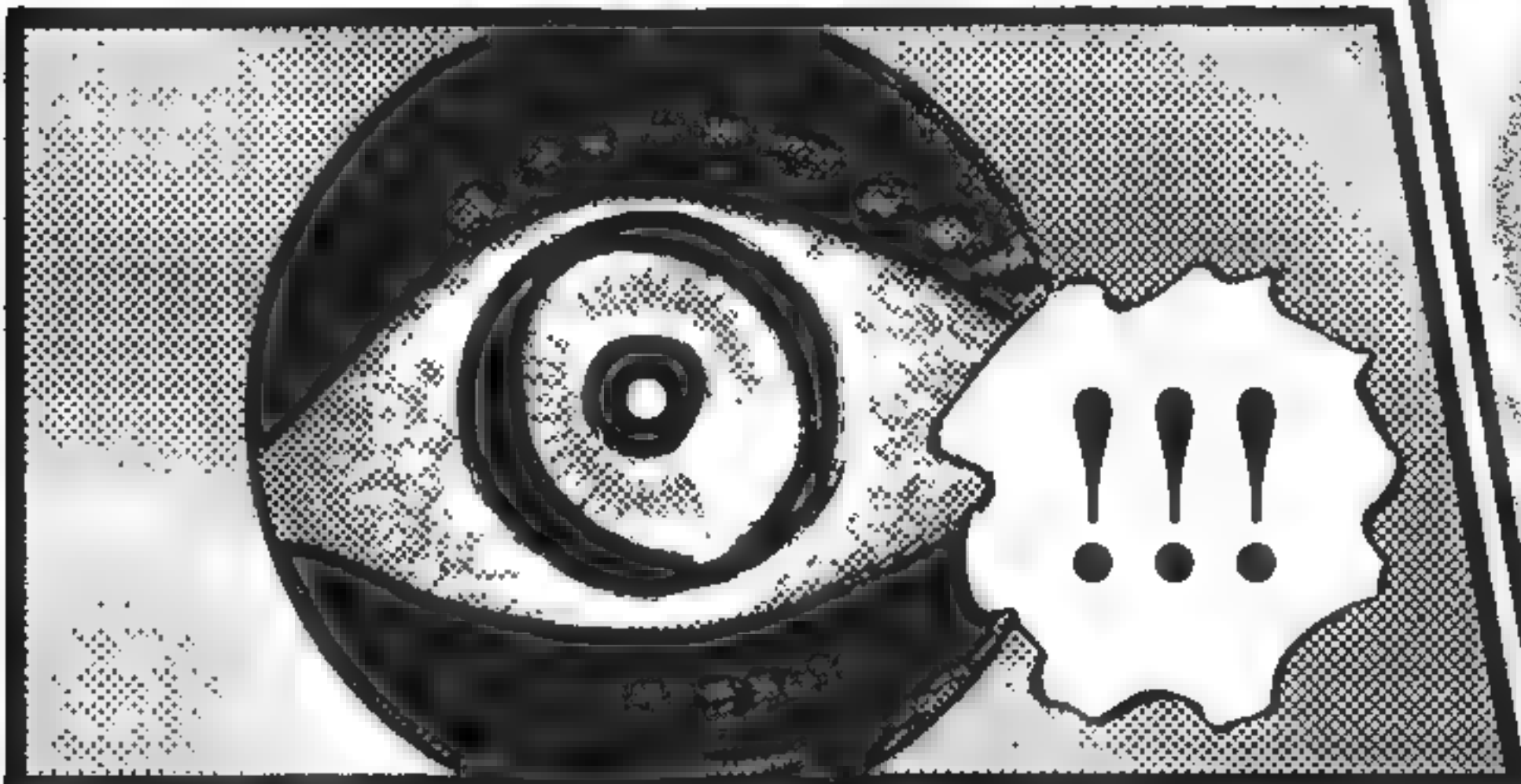


YOU
LIAR!

Y...



A...
KNIFE?

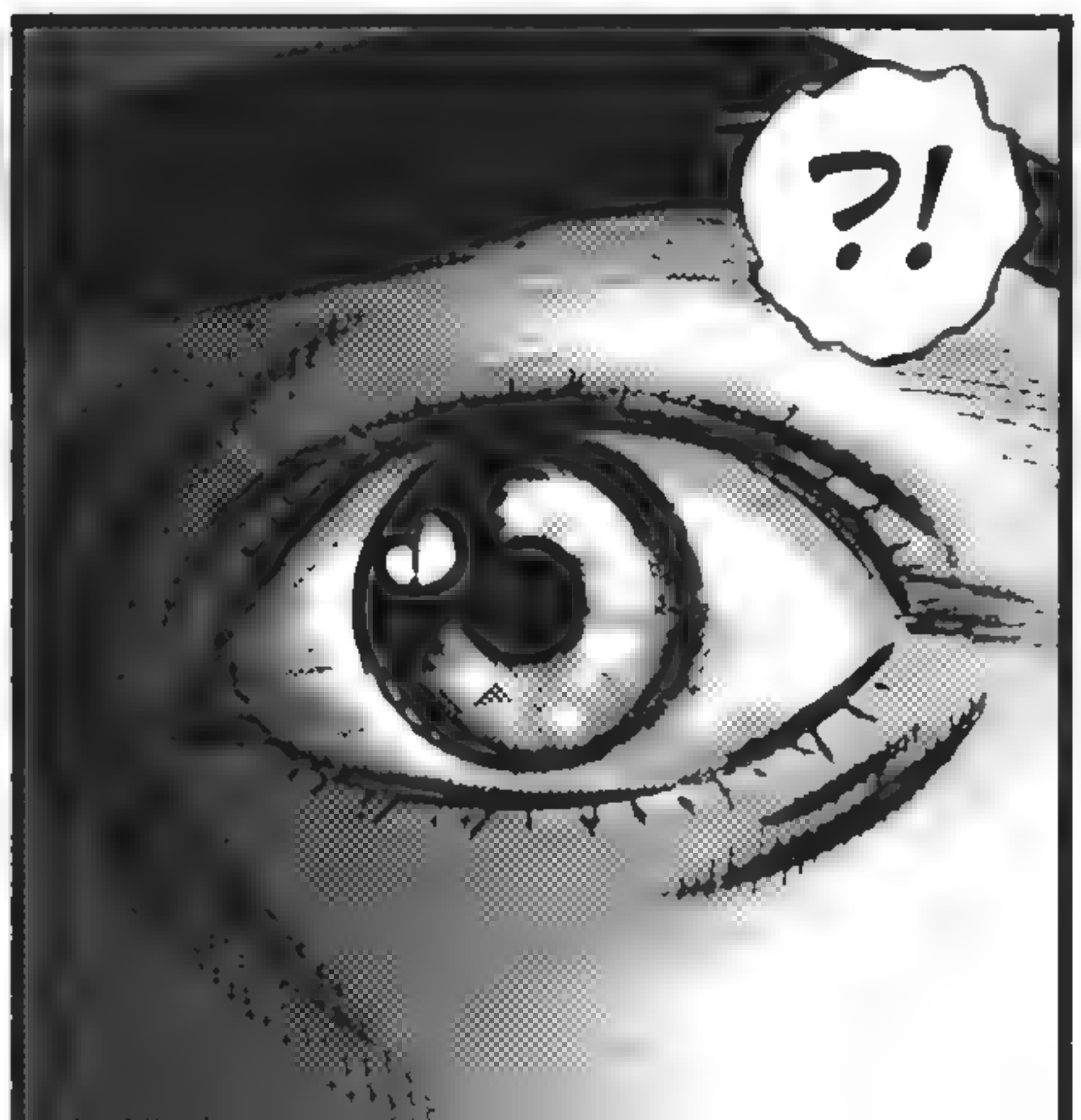
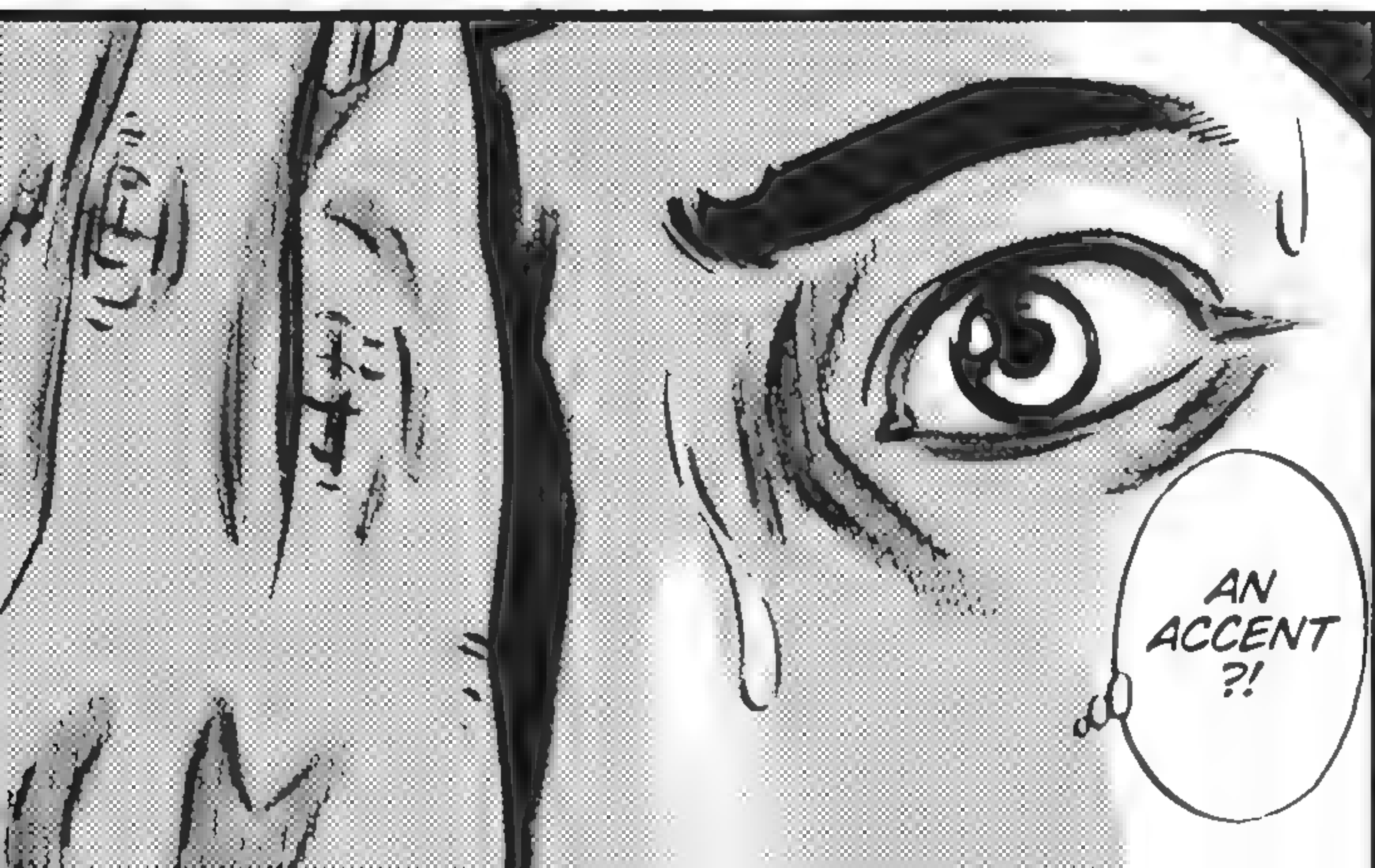
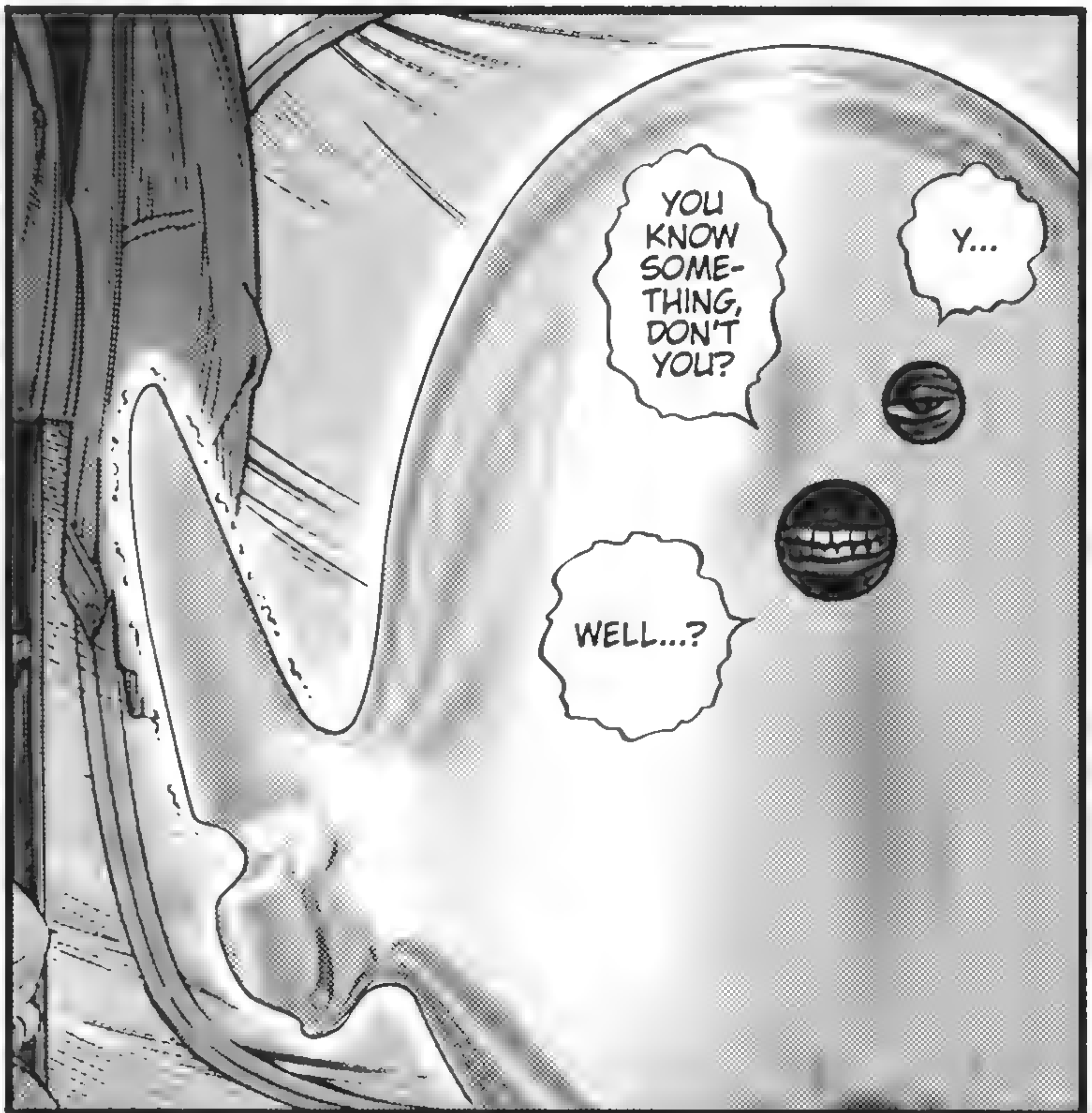


!!!



YOU'VE...
GOT A
KNIFE
AGAIN...?





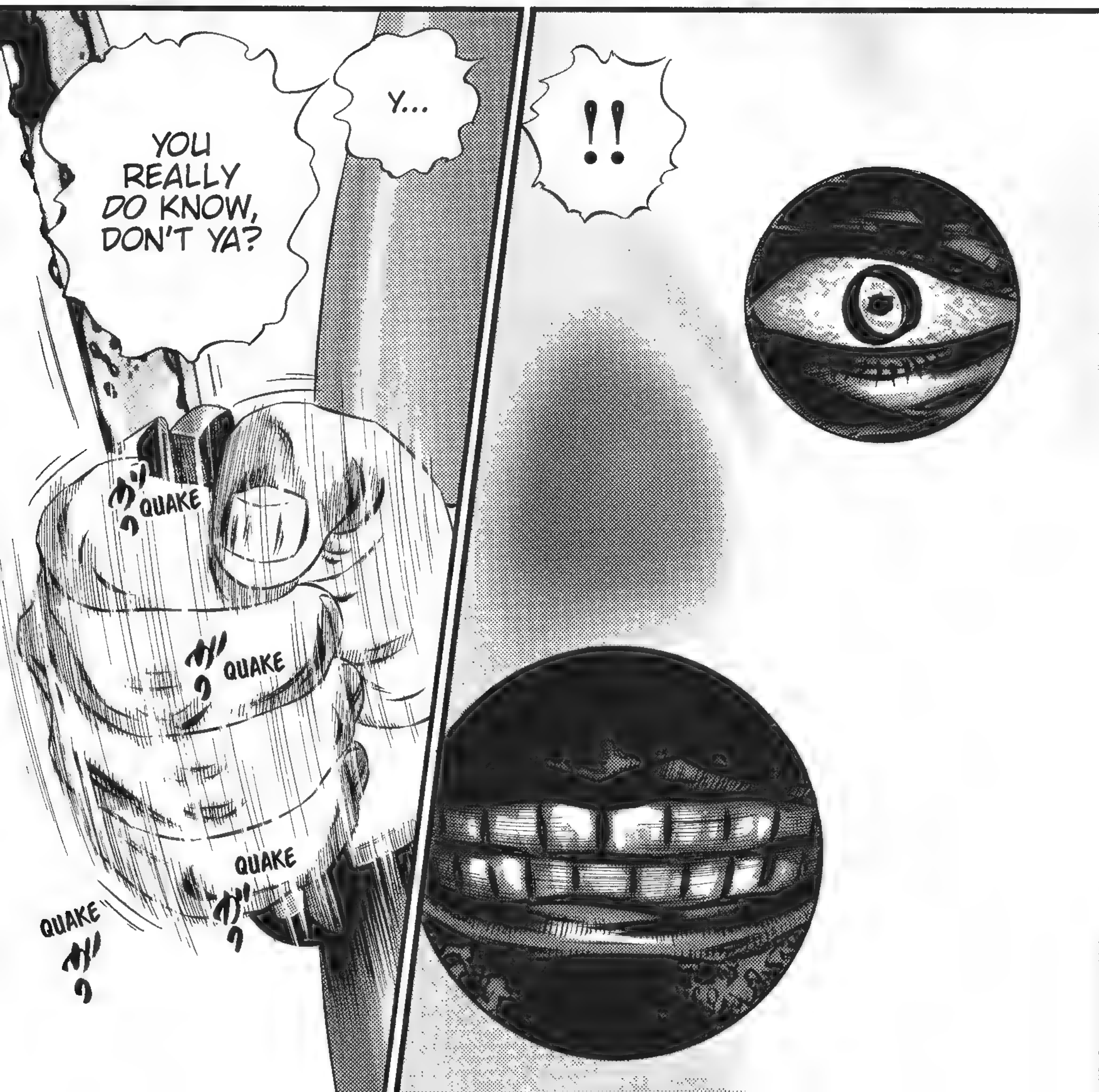




THEY'RE
RELATED
SOME-
HOW,
AIN'T
THEY?!

YOUR
ACCENT...

THAT
KNIFE...



YOU
REALLY
DO KNOW,
DON'T YA?

Y...

!!

QUAKE

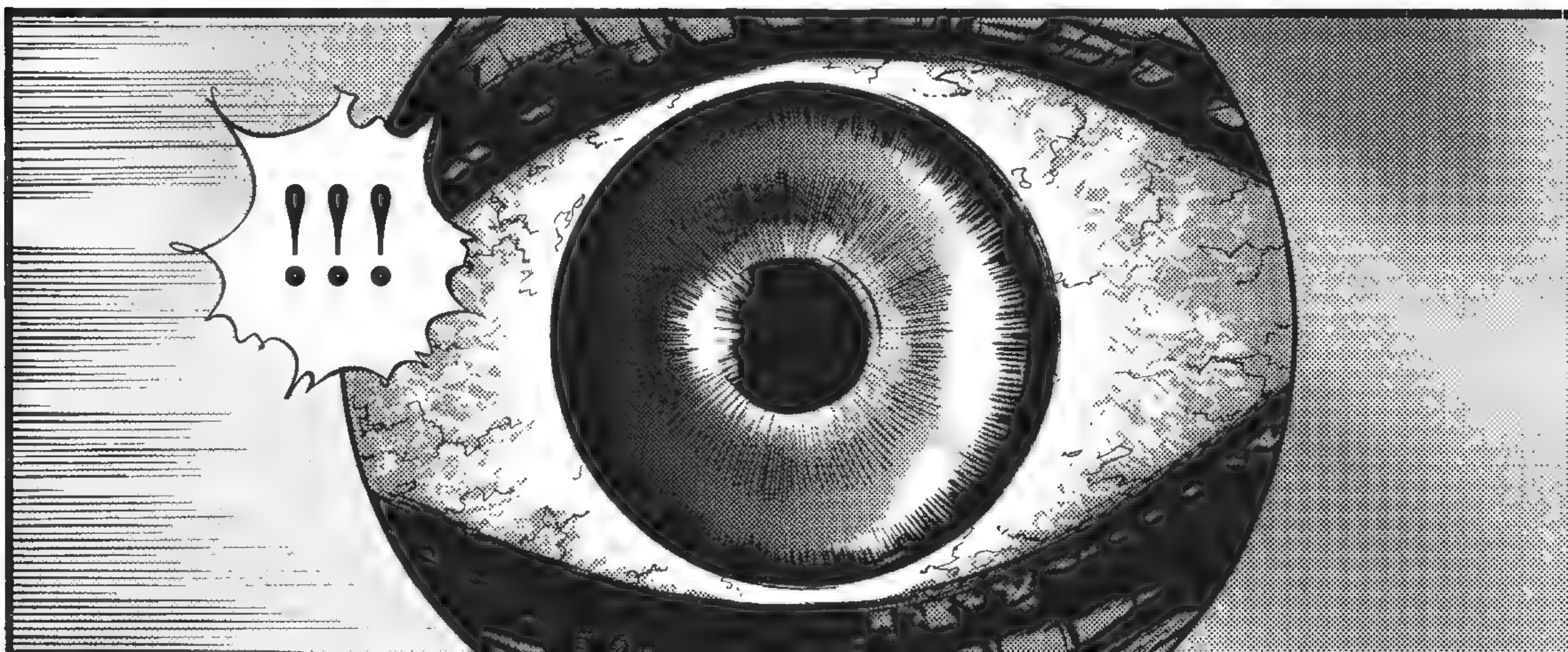
QUAKE

QUAKE

QUAKE



MY GOD...







SH...

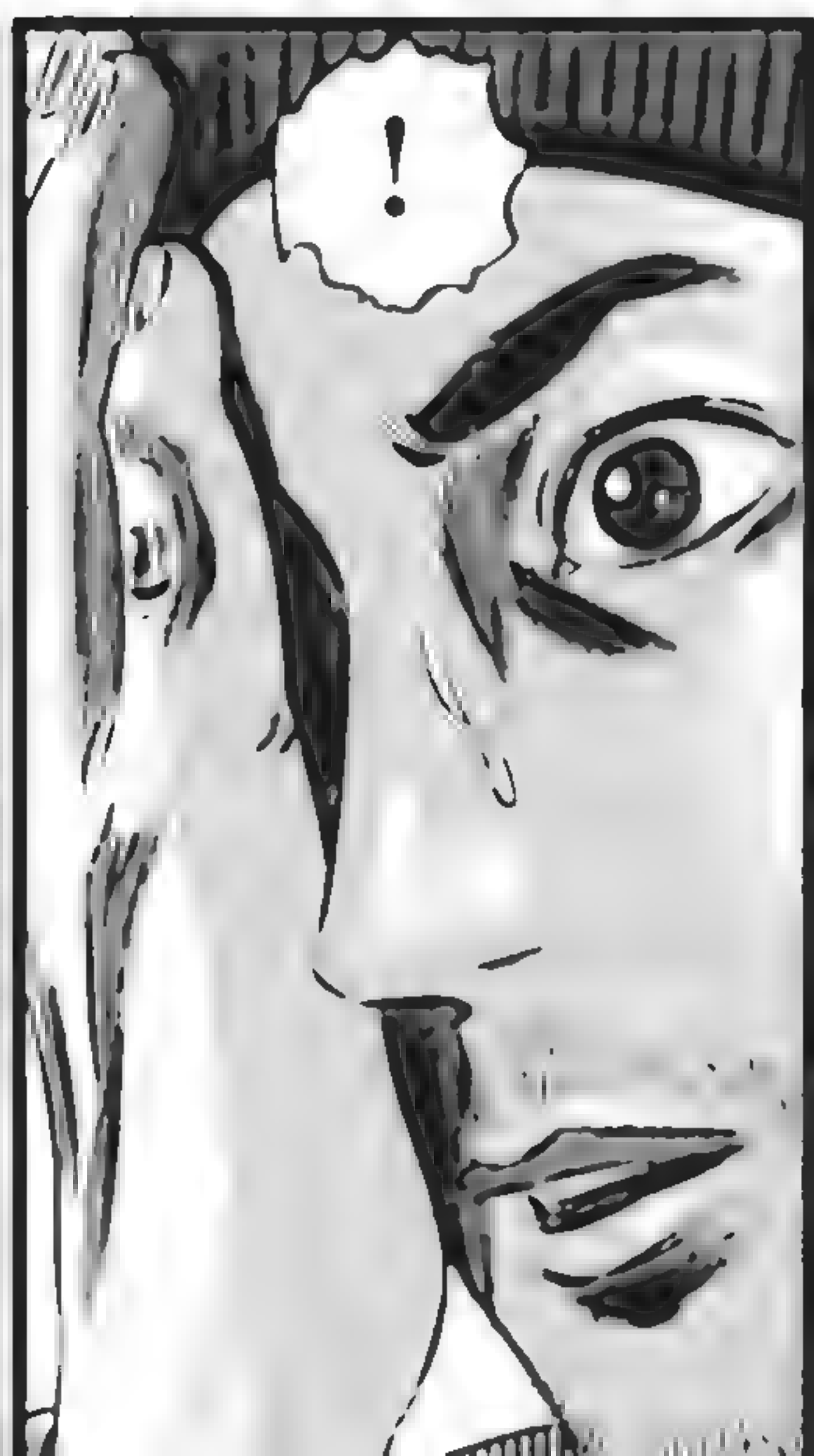
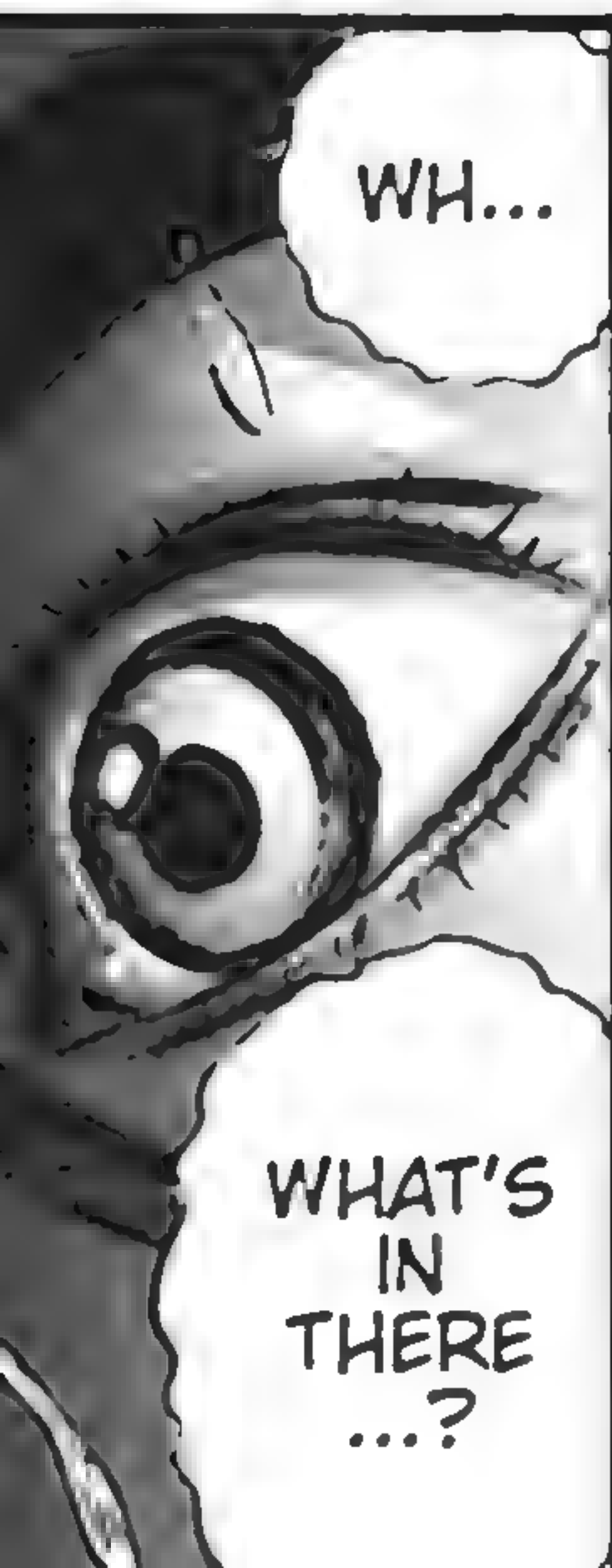
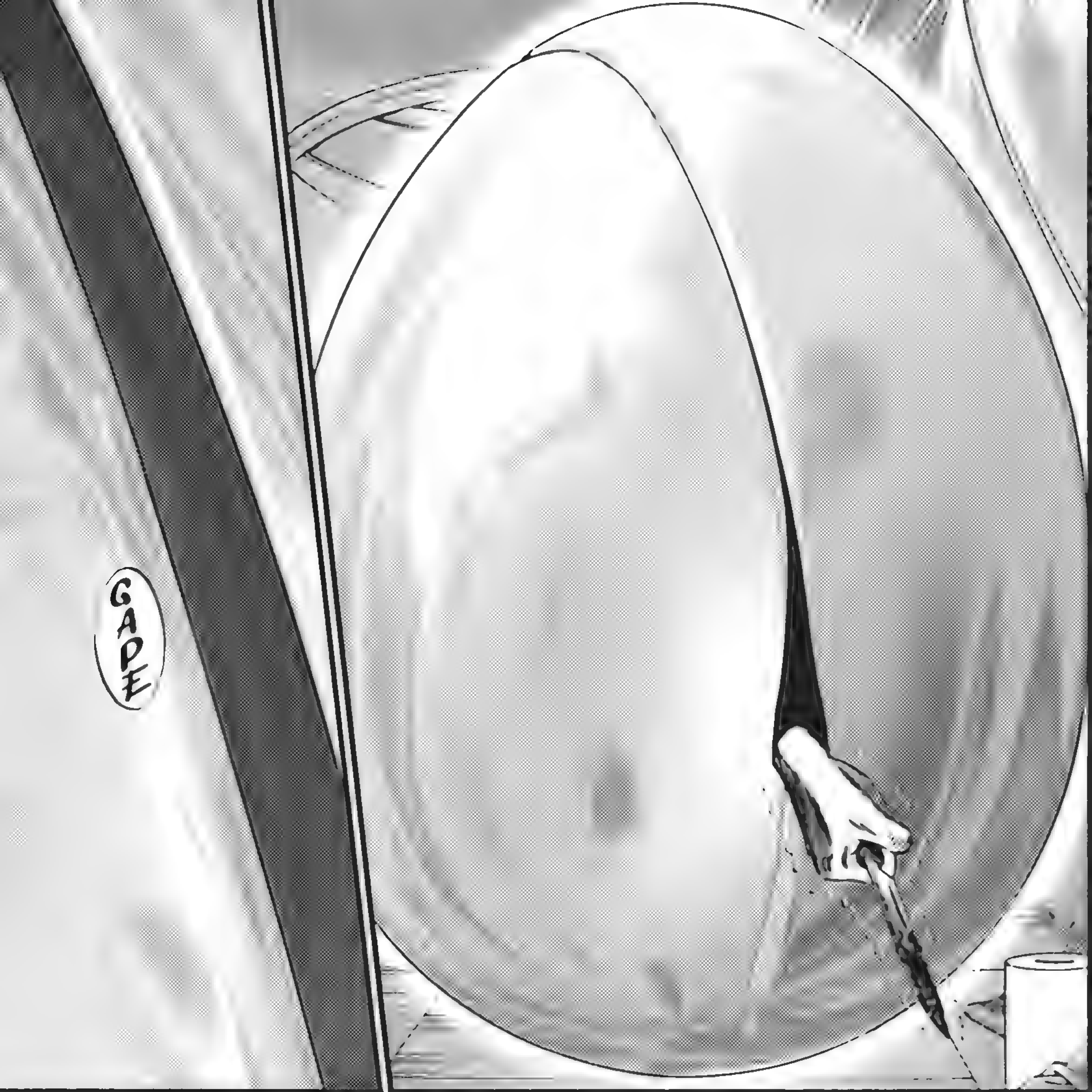
SLASH



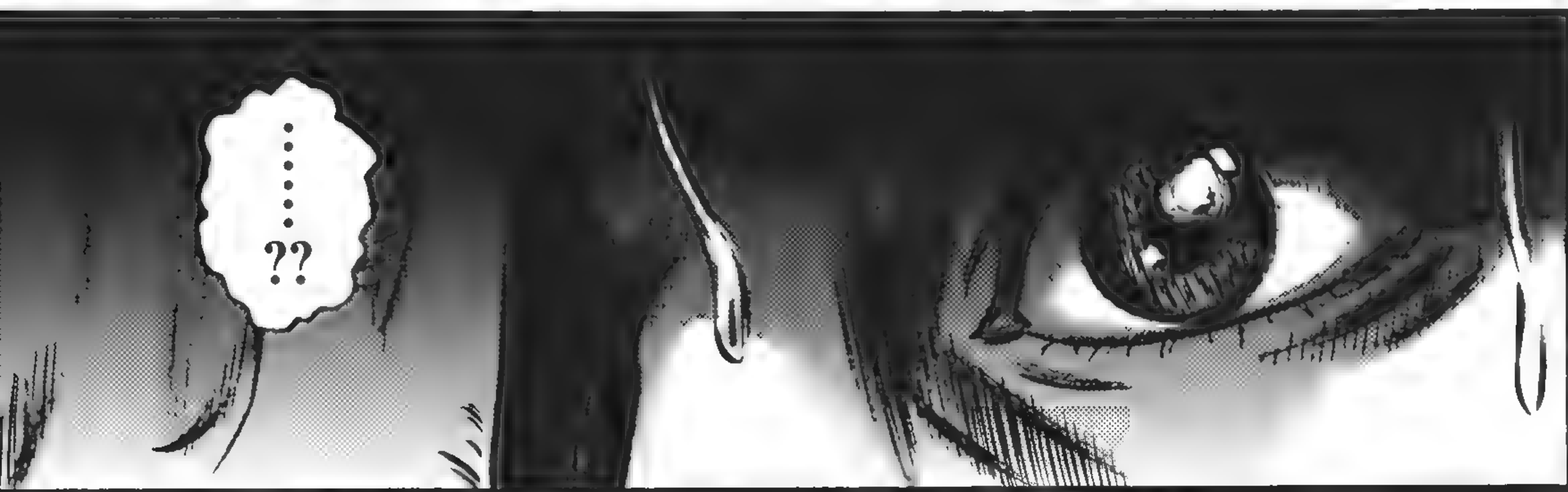
DRIB

GAP

!!













?!



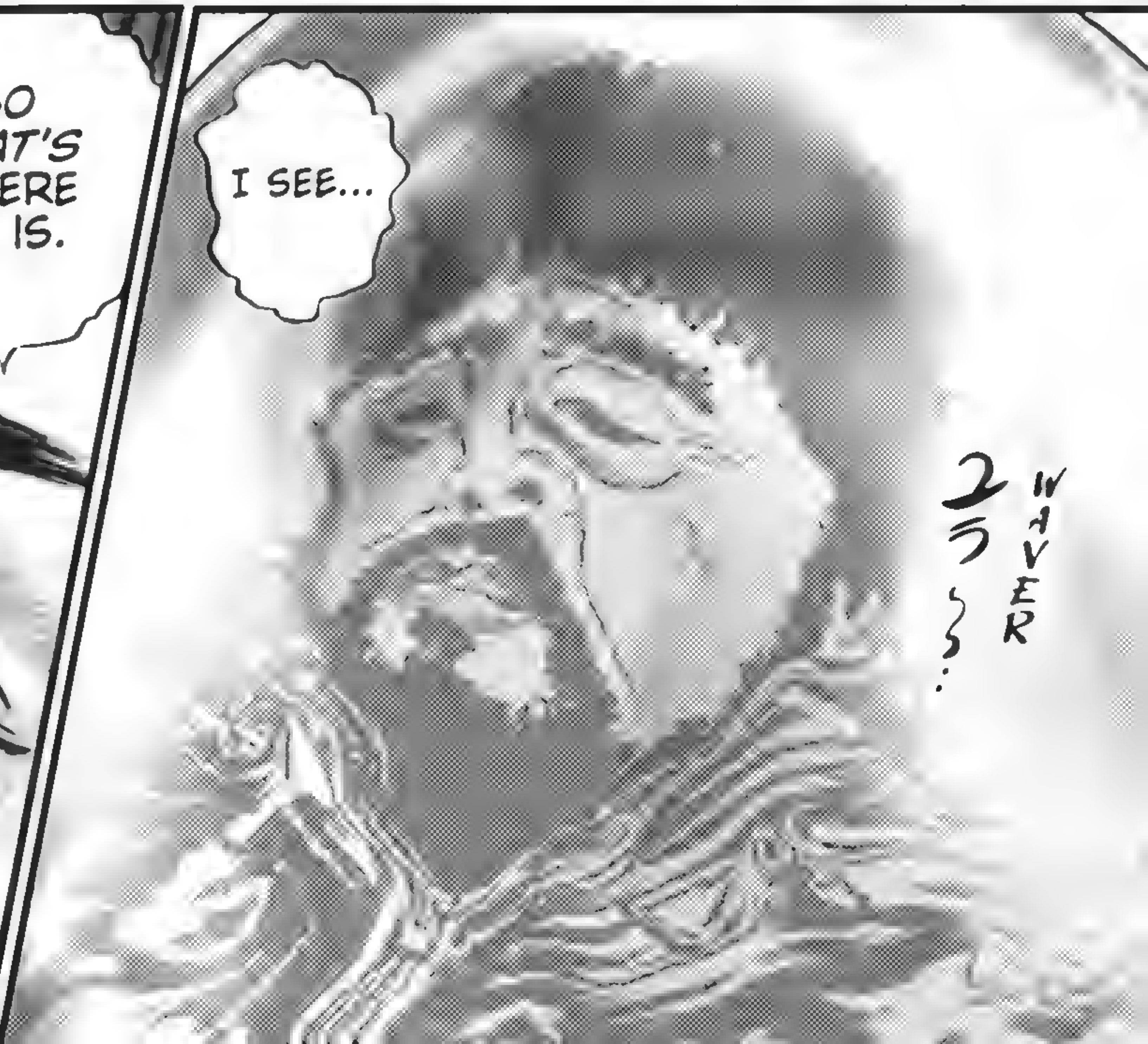
2/3
W A V E R

2/3
W A V E R



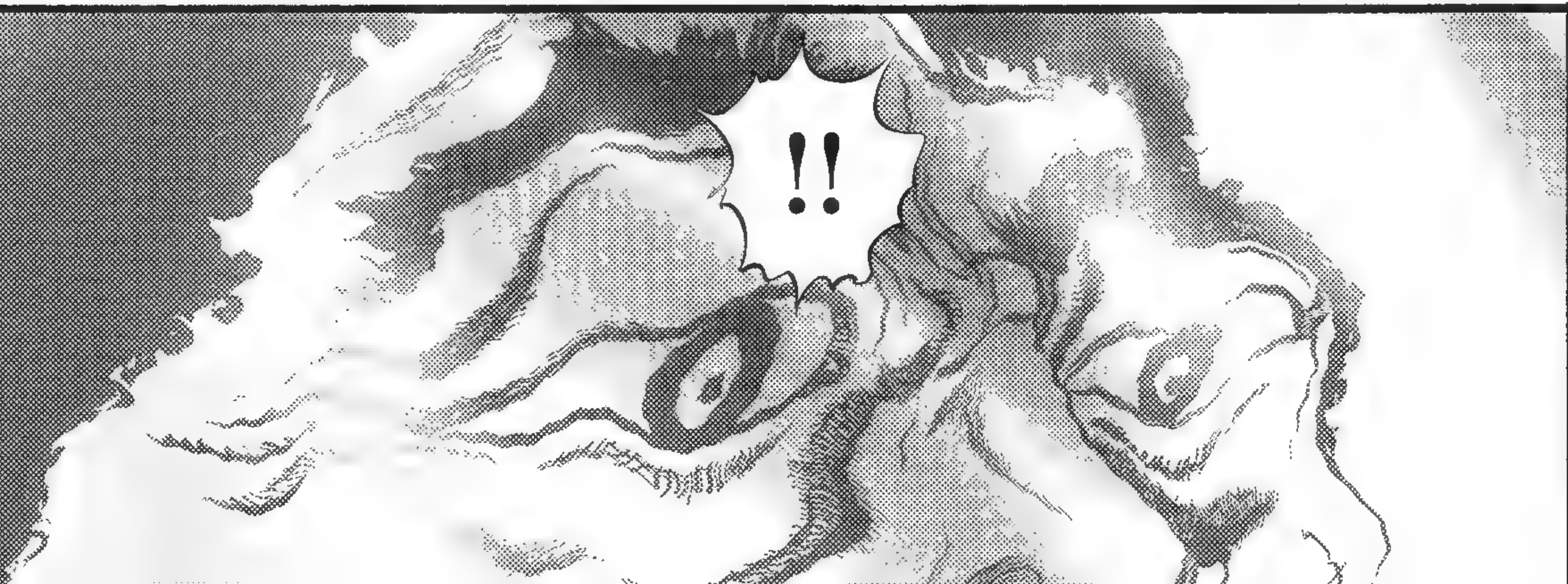
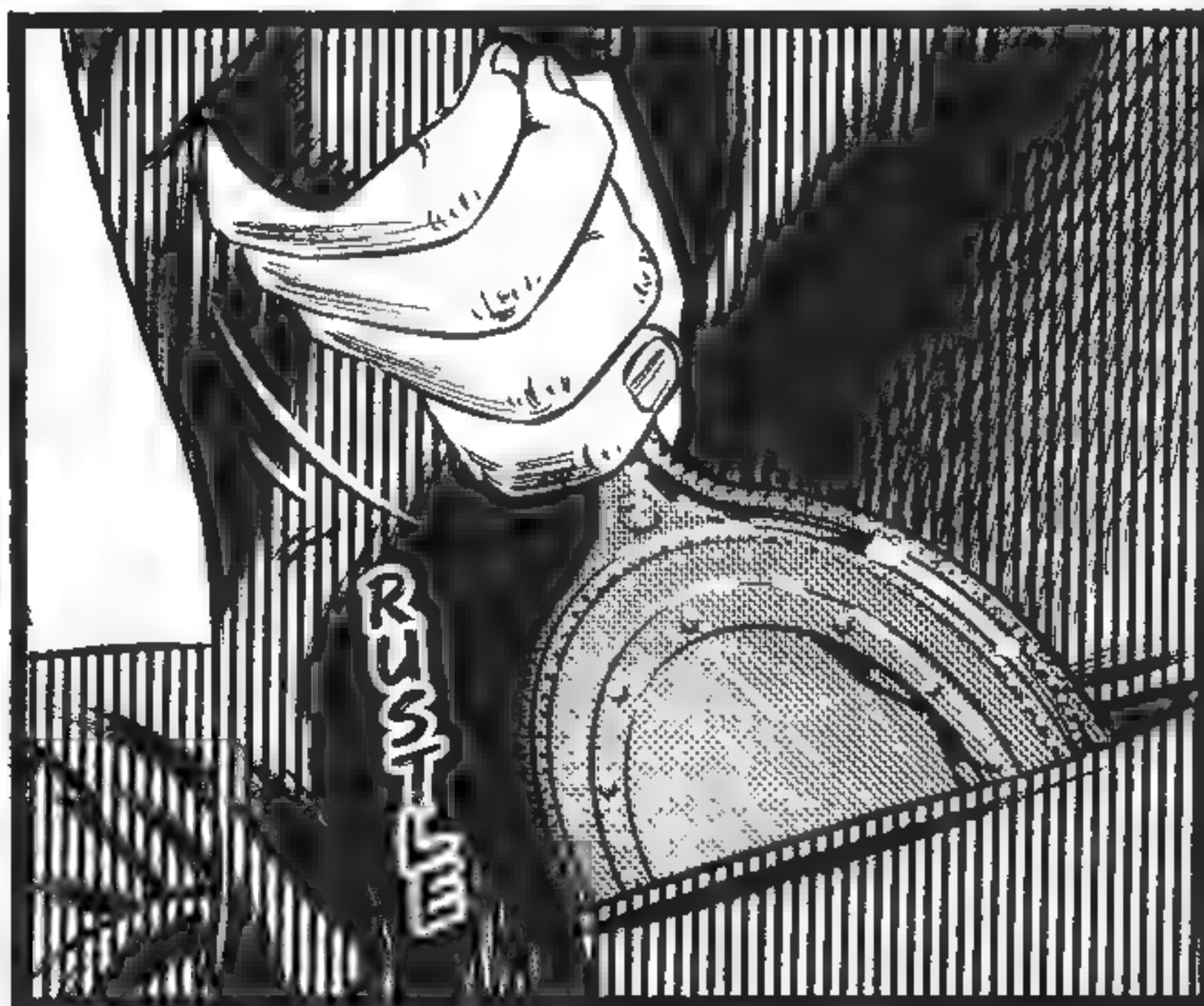
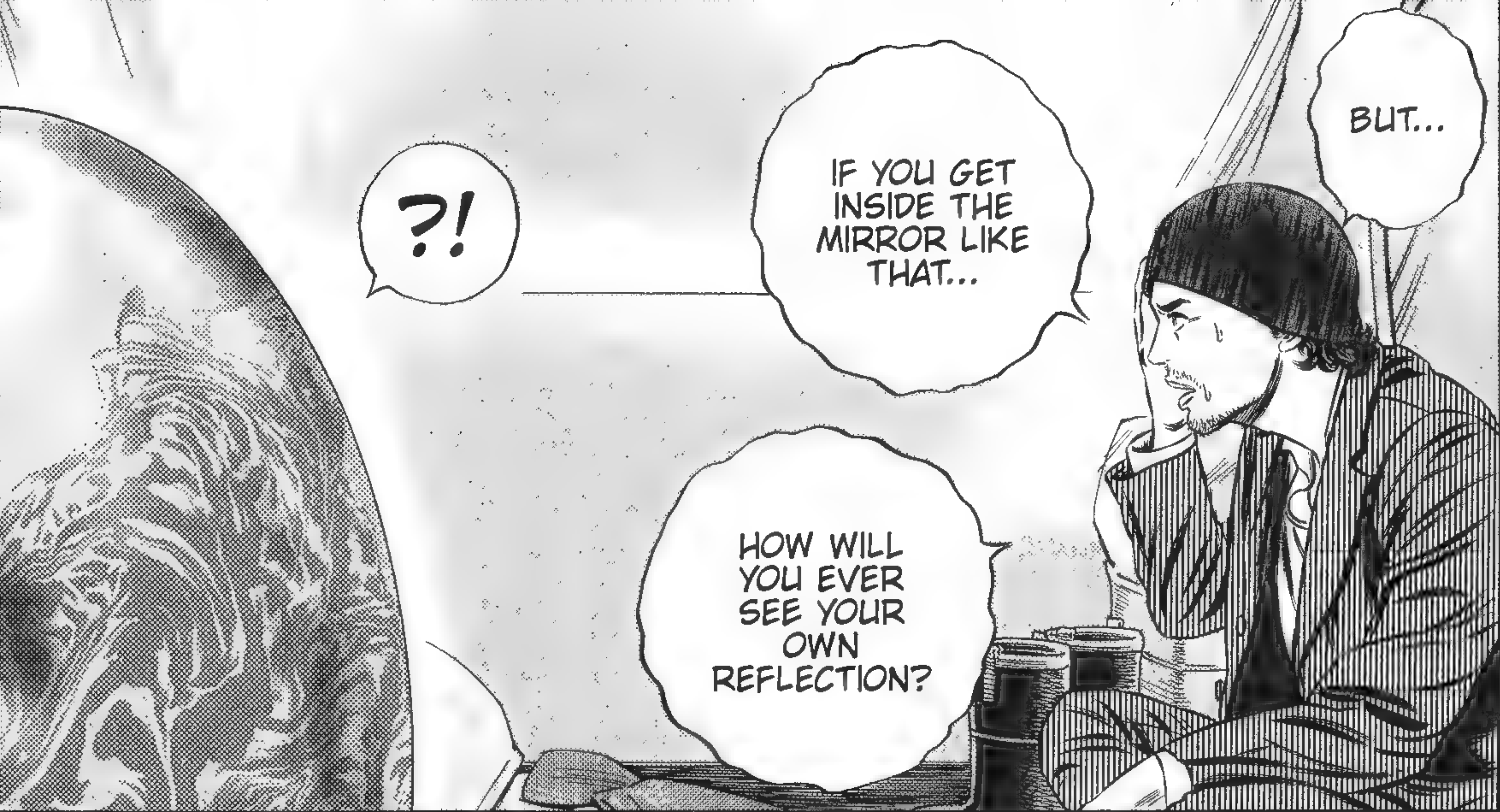
INSIDE
THE
REFLEC-
TION!

SO
THAT'S
WHERE
HE IS.



I SEE...

2/3
W A V E R
:



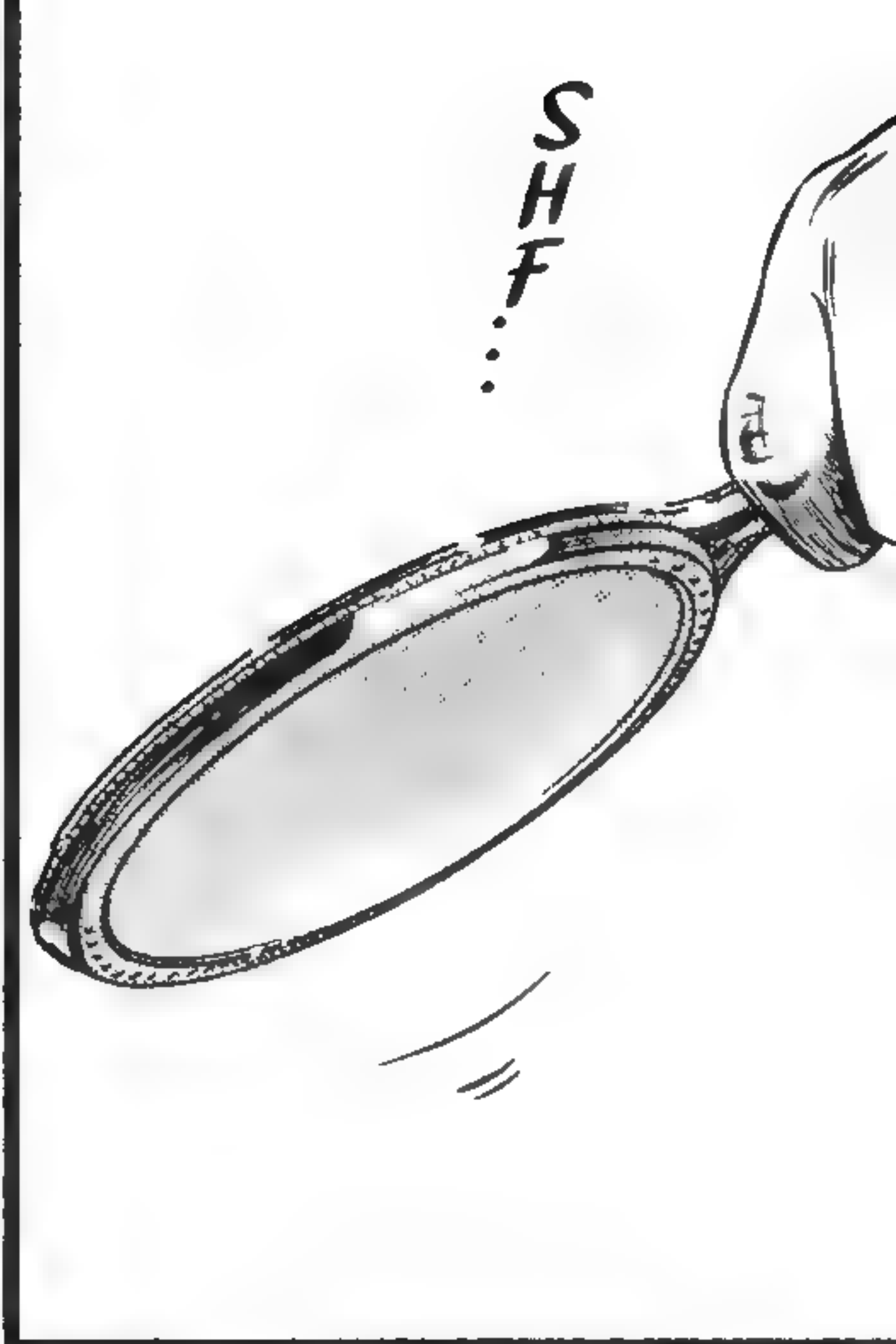


IF I SEE
MY OWN
FACE...

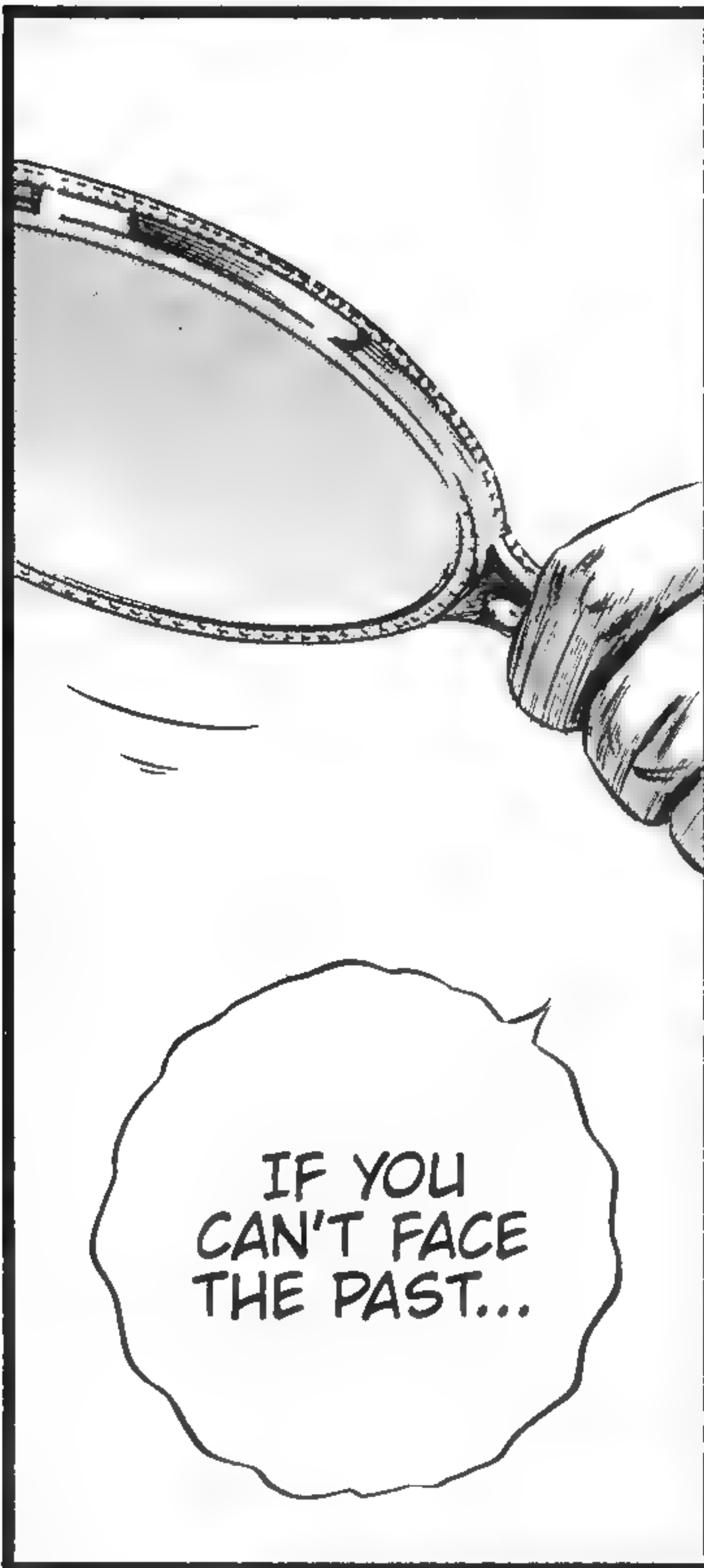


NO!
DON'T!

N...



S
H
F
...

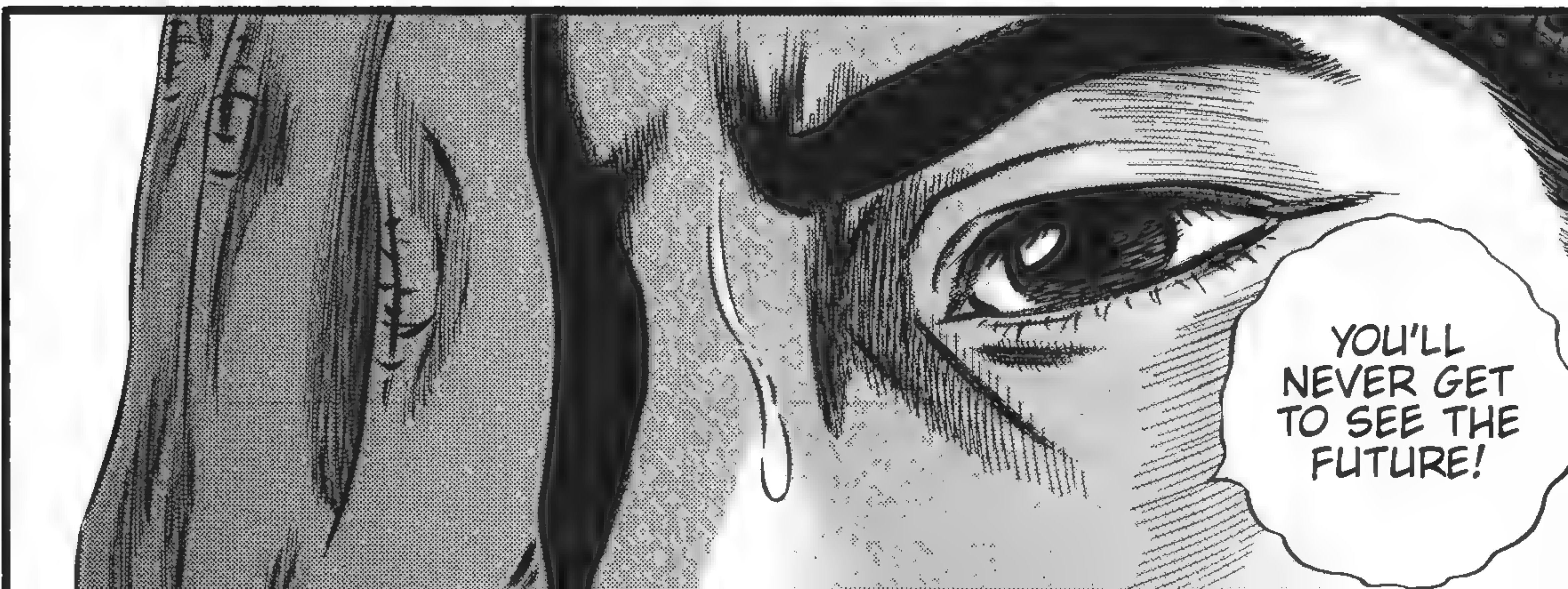


IF YOU
CAN'T FACE
THE PAST...

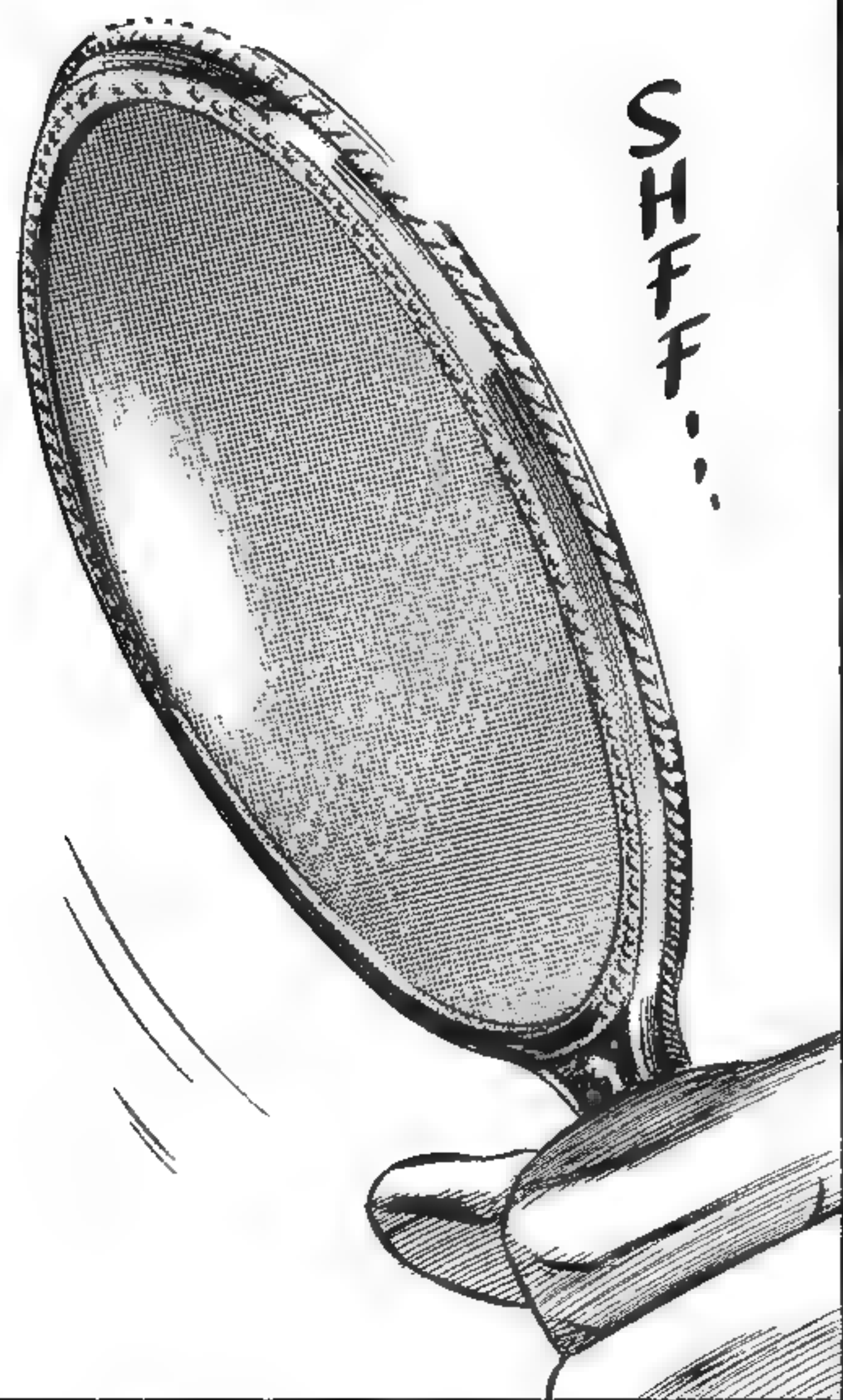


I...

I'LL
REMEMBER
THE PAST!



YOU'LL
NEVER GET
TO SEE THE
FUTURE!



S H F F . .

FER THE
REST'A M'
LIFE!

I'LL BE
STUCK
IN THIS
PARK...

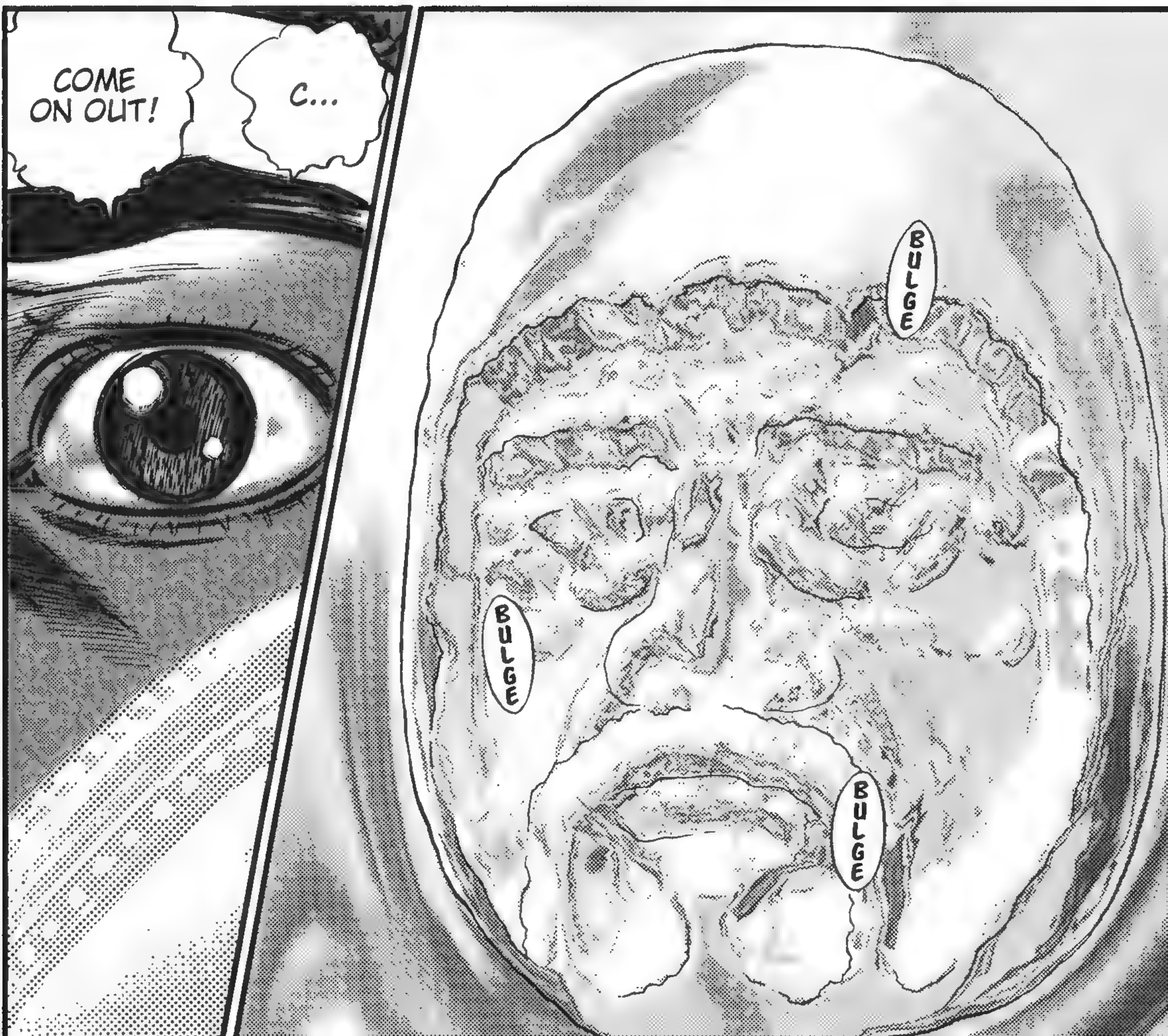
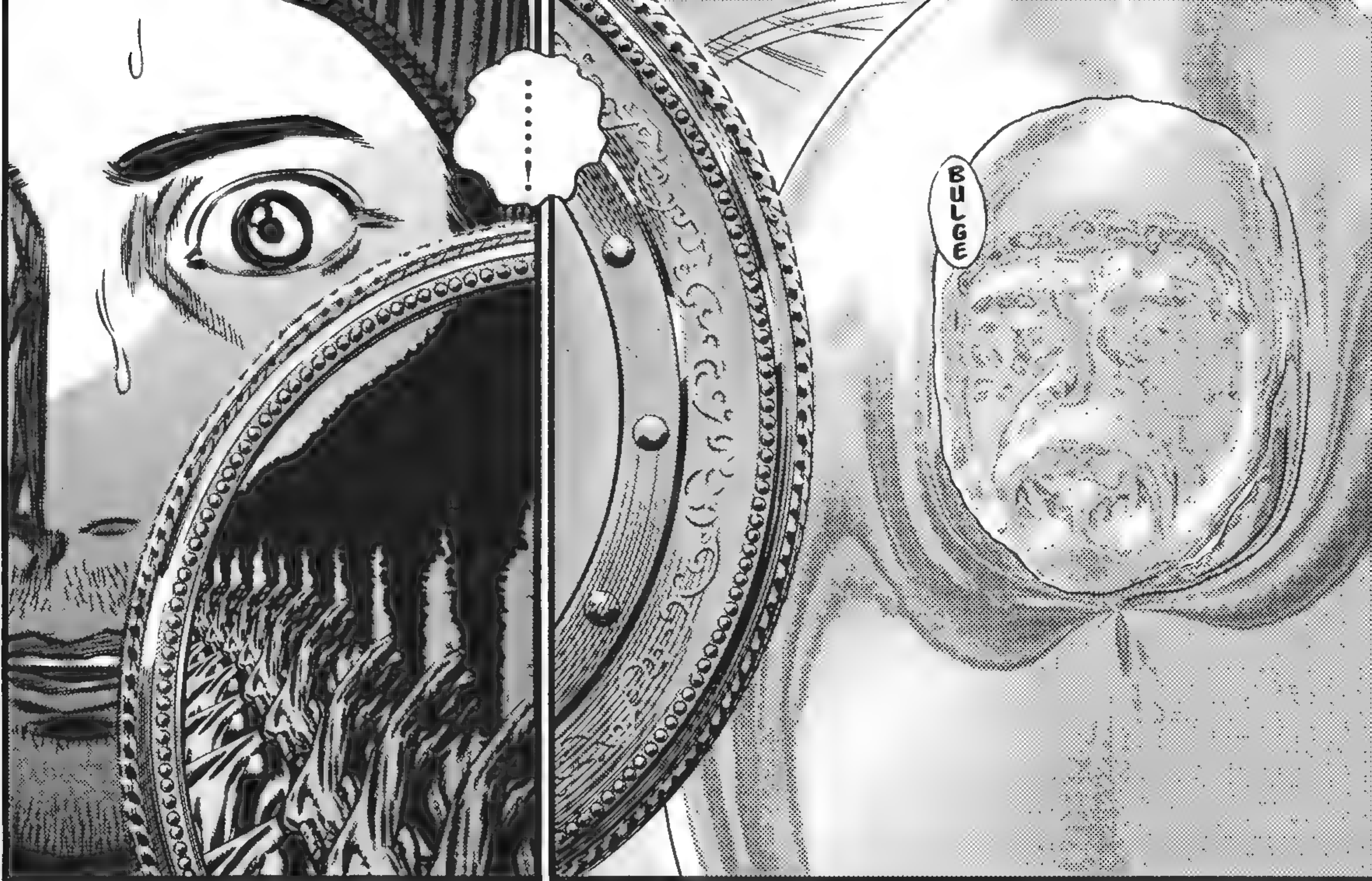
WHAT
FUTURE?! I
AIN'T GOT
ONE!



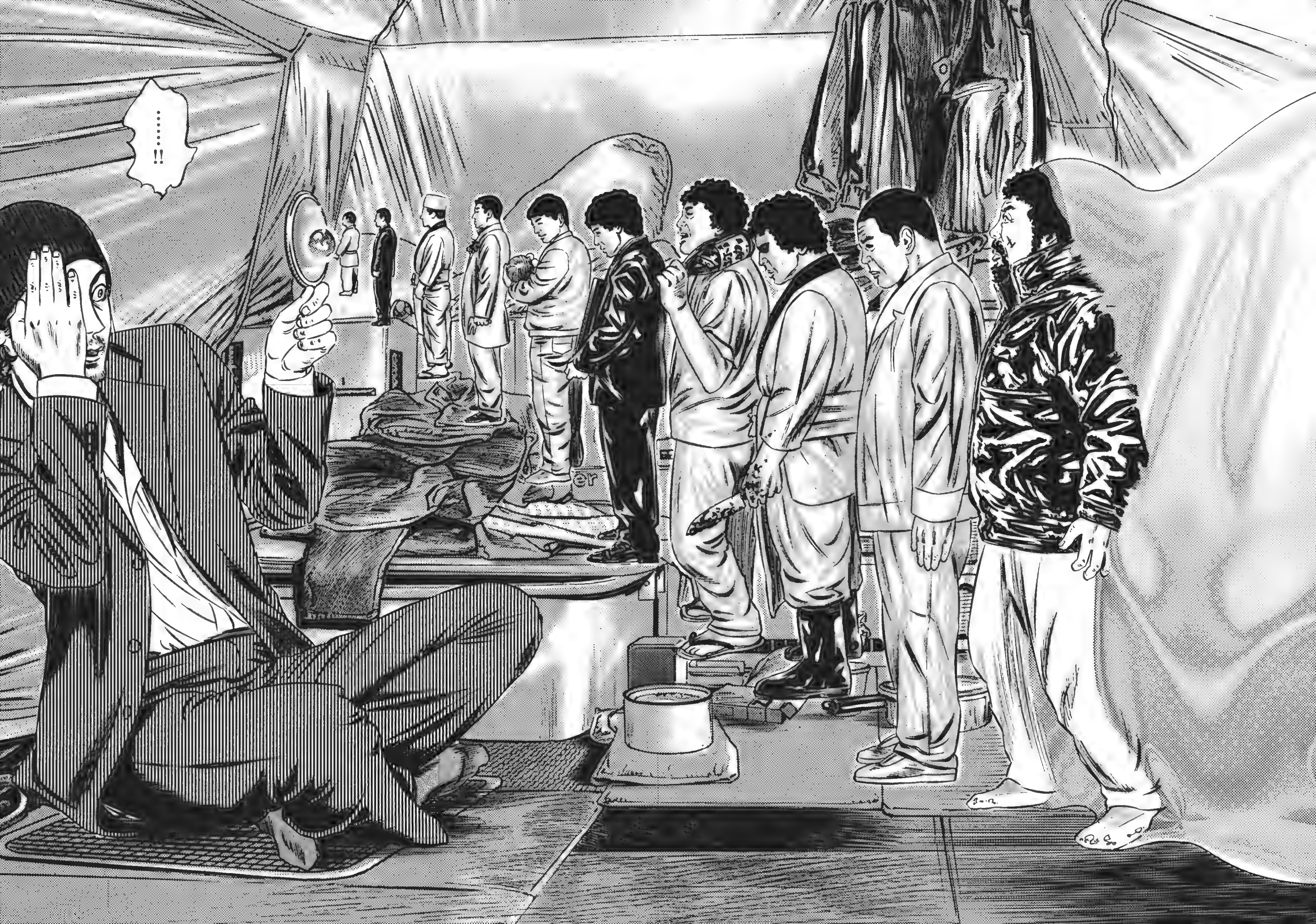
LOOK AT
YOURSELF!



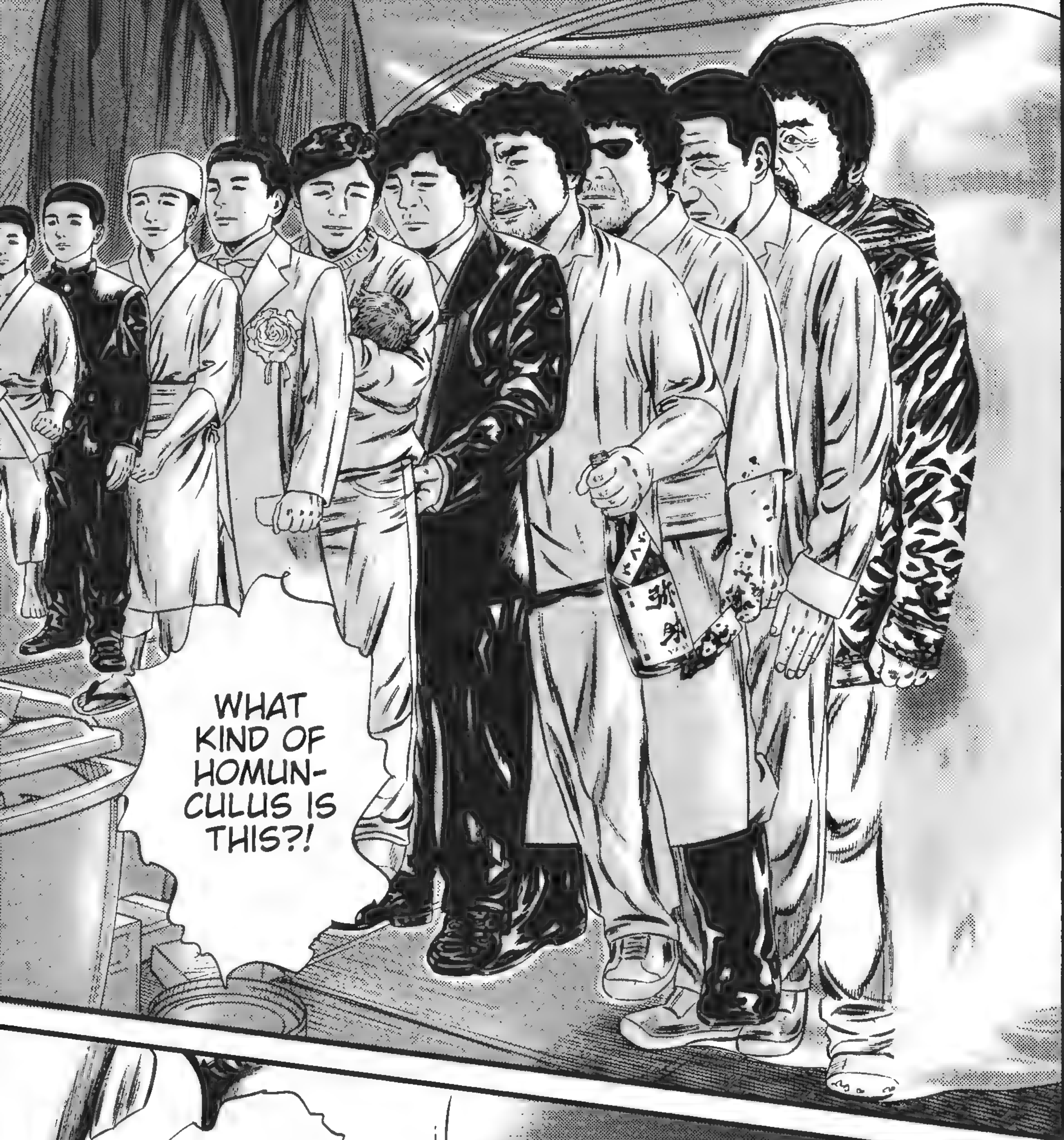










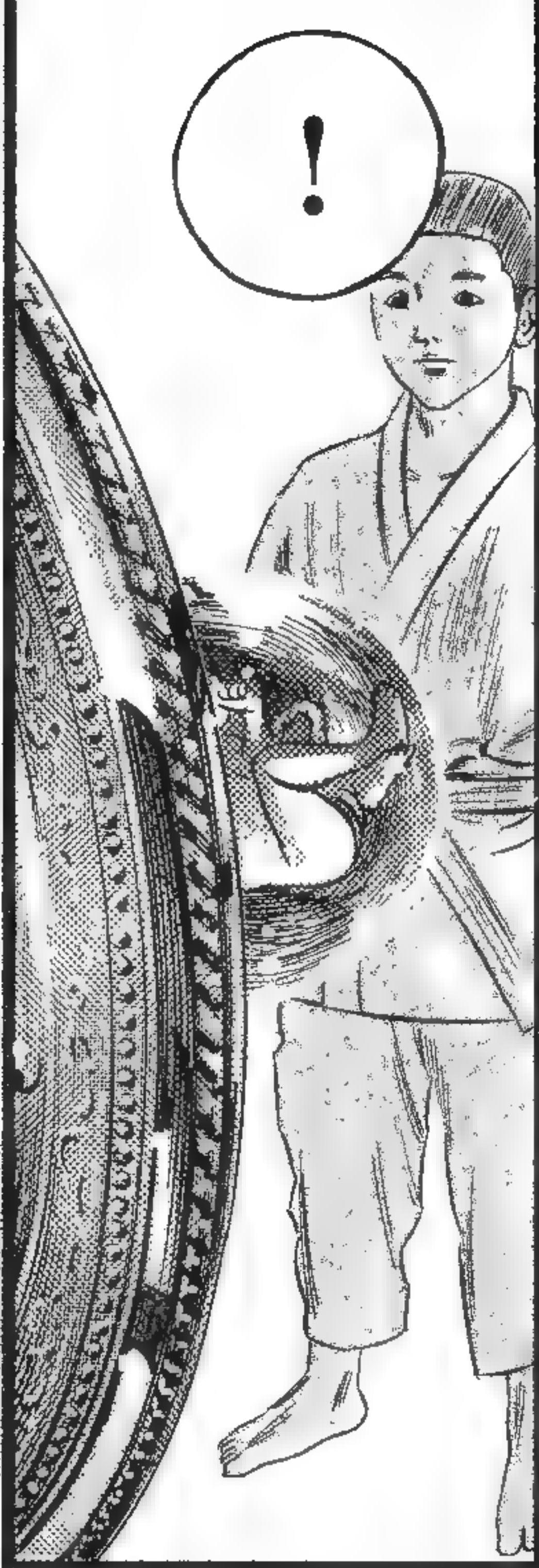


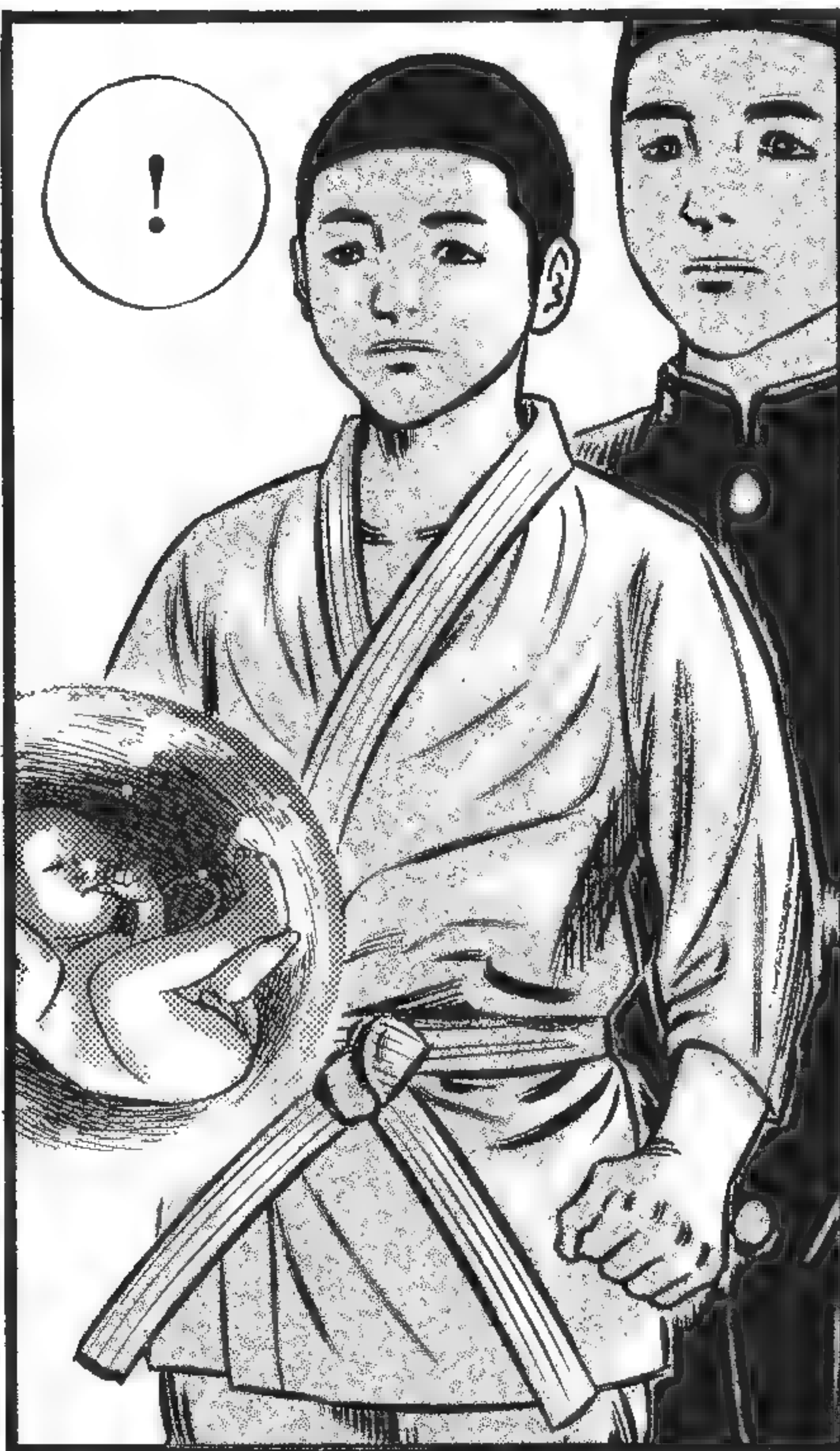
WHAT
KIND OF
HOMUN-
CULUS IS
THIS?!



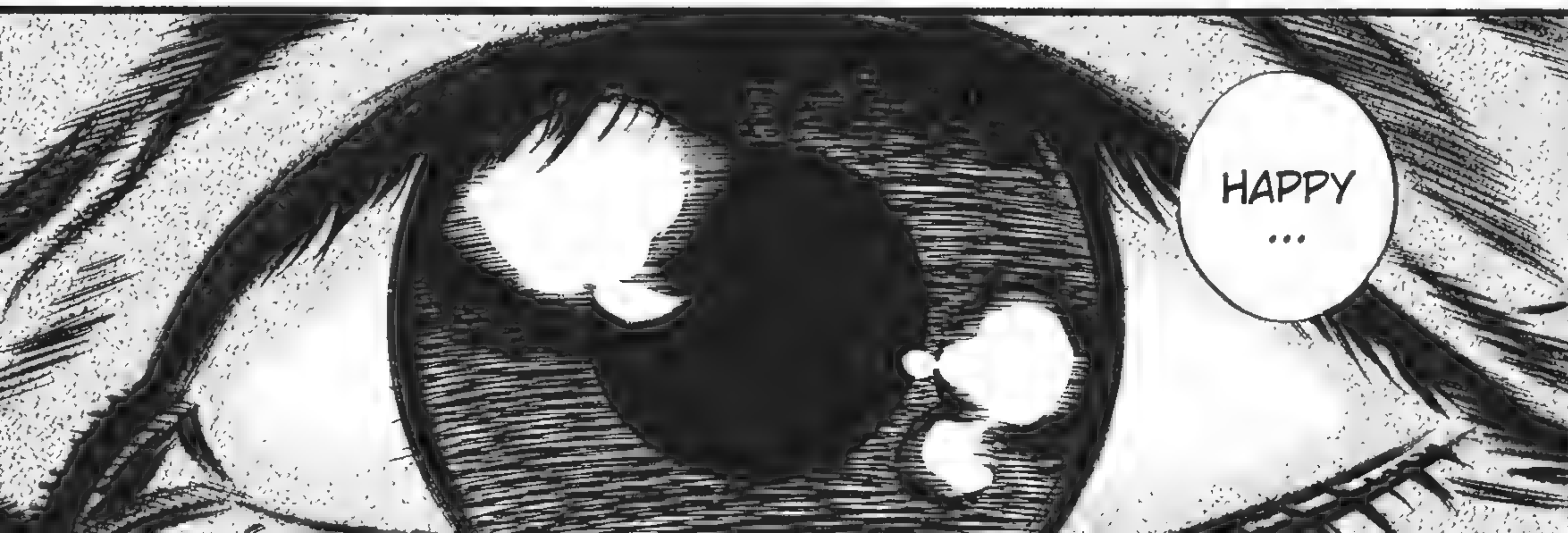
IT'S
LIKE THAT
INFINITE
HALLWAY
YOU SEE...

WHEN TWO
MIRRORS
FACE EACH
OTHER.













YOUR WIFE
MUST'VE BEEN
A WONDERFUL
PERSON.



YEAH...

SQUINT



WORKED
AT OUR
RESTAURANT.
FOLKS CAME
JUST TO SEE
HER CUTE
FACE.

THE
OTHER
CHEFS
WERE SO
JEALOUS.

SHE
WAS THE
BEST.



AND YOU
WERE
BLESSED
WITH A
CHILD.



A LITTLE
GIRL?



IT WAS
SO FUN
COMING
HOME
TO THEM
EVERY
DAY...

I REALLY
HIT MY
STRIDE
AT WORK
THEN.

MY SWEET
LITTLE
PRINCESS.

YEAH.



WE
WERE SO
HAPPY...





BUT THEN...
YOUR WIFE
DIED.





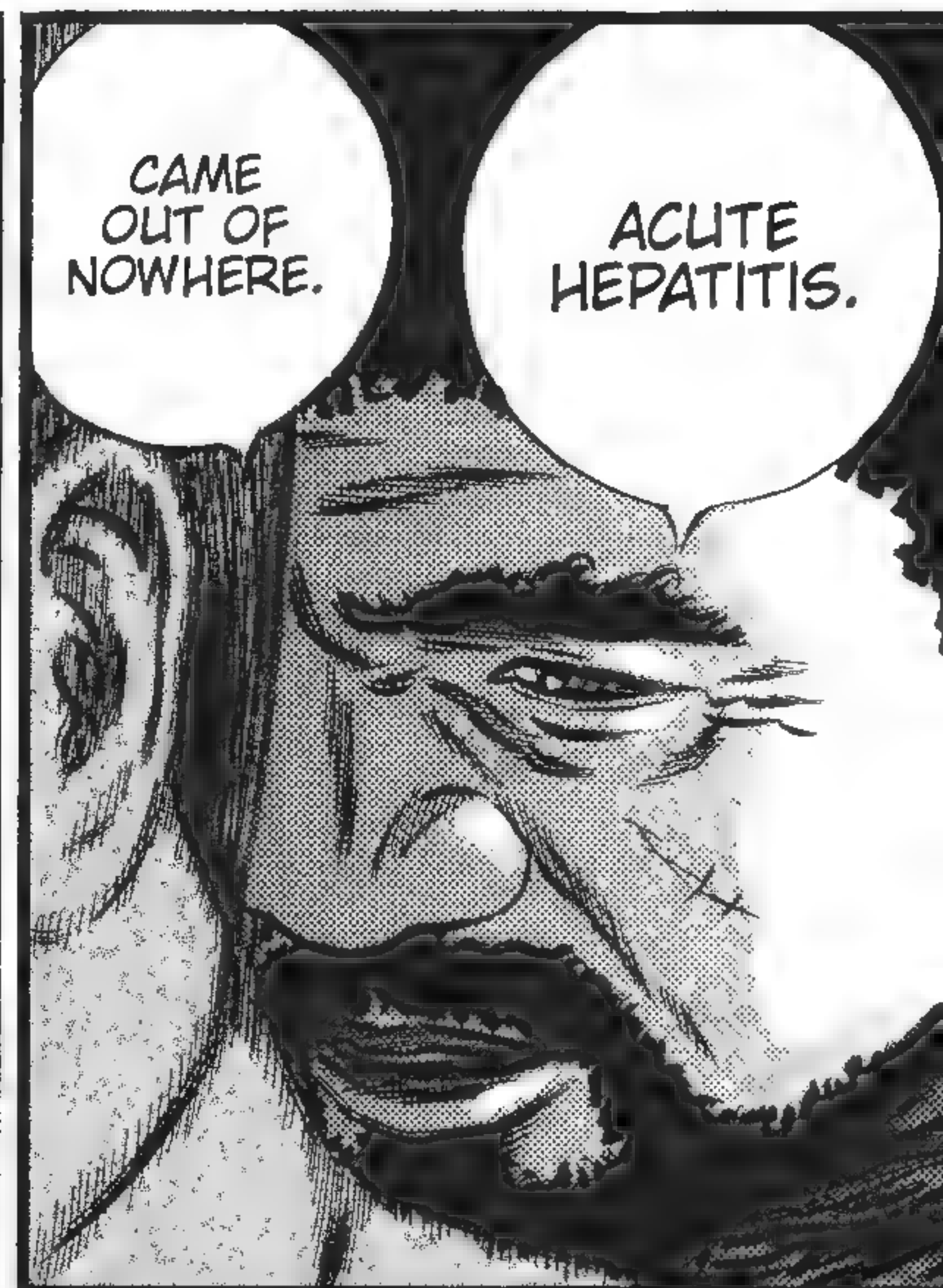


MICHIKO'S
DEATH WAS
JUST...SO
SUDDEN.



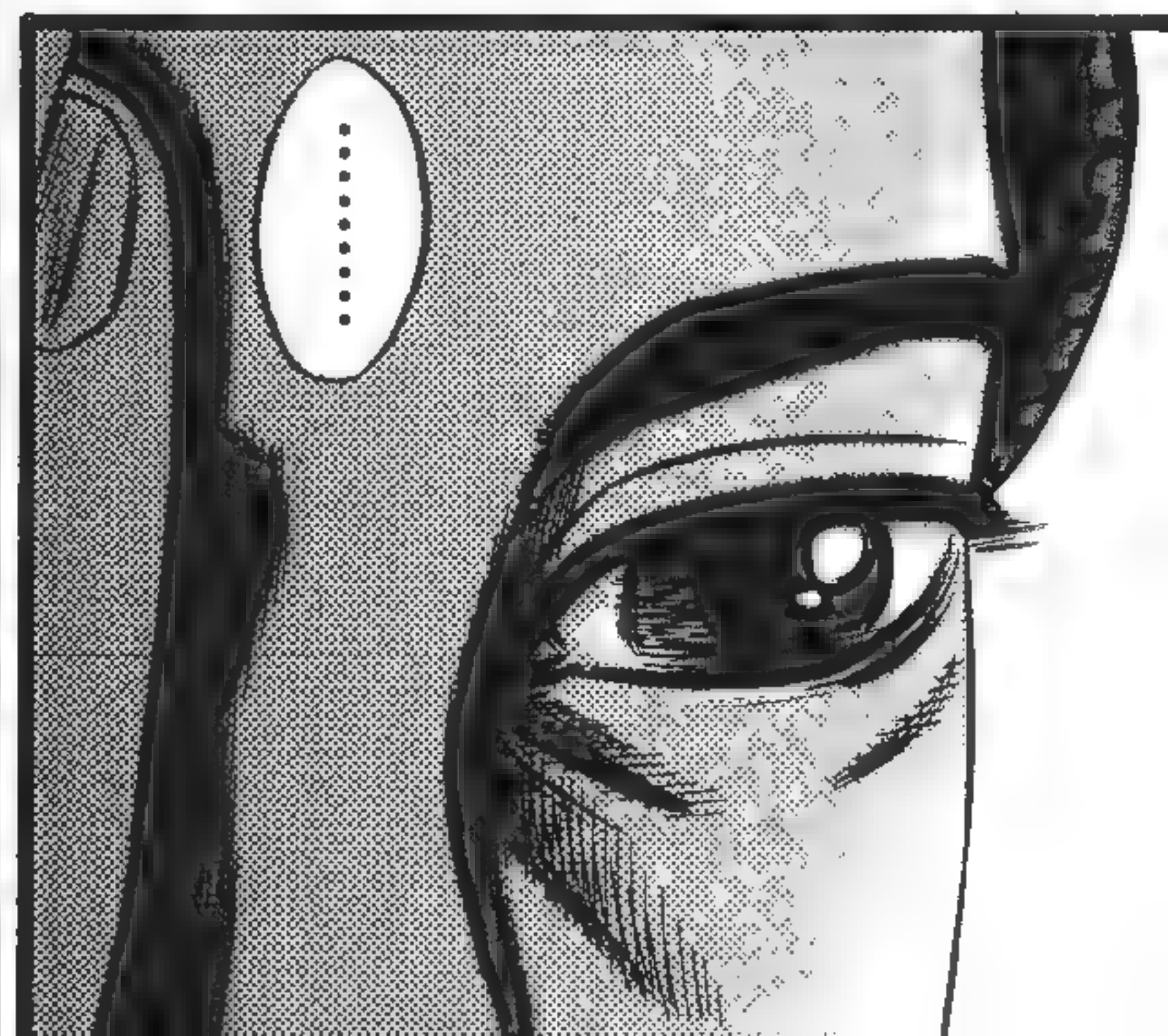
WHEN WE
CREMATED
HER, I
SAW...

THIS WHITE
SMOKE RISE
STRAIGHT UP
INTO THE AIR
AND MELD WITH
THE CLOUDS.



CAME
OUT OF
NOWHERE.

ACUTE
HEPATITIS.



...



WAS TURNING
INTO A BIG
WHITE CLOUD
IN THE SKY.

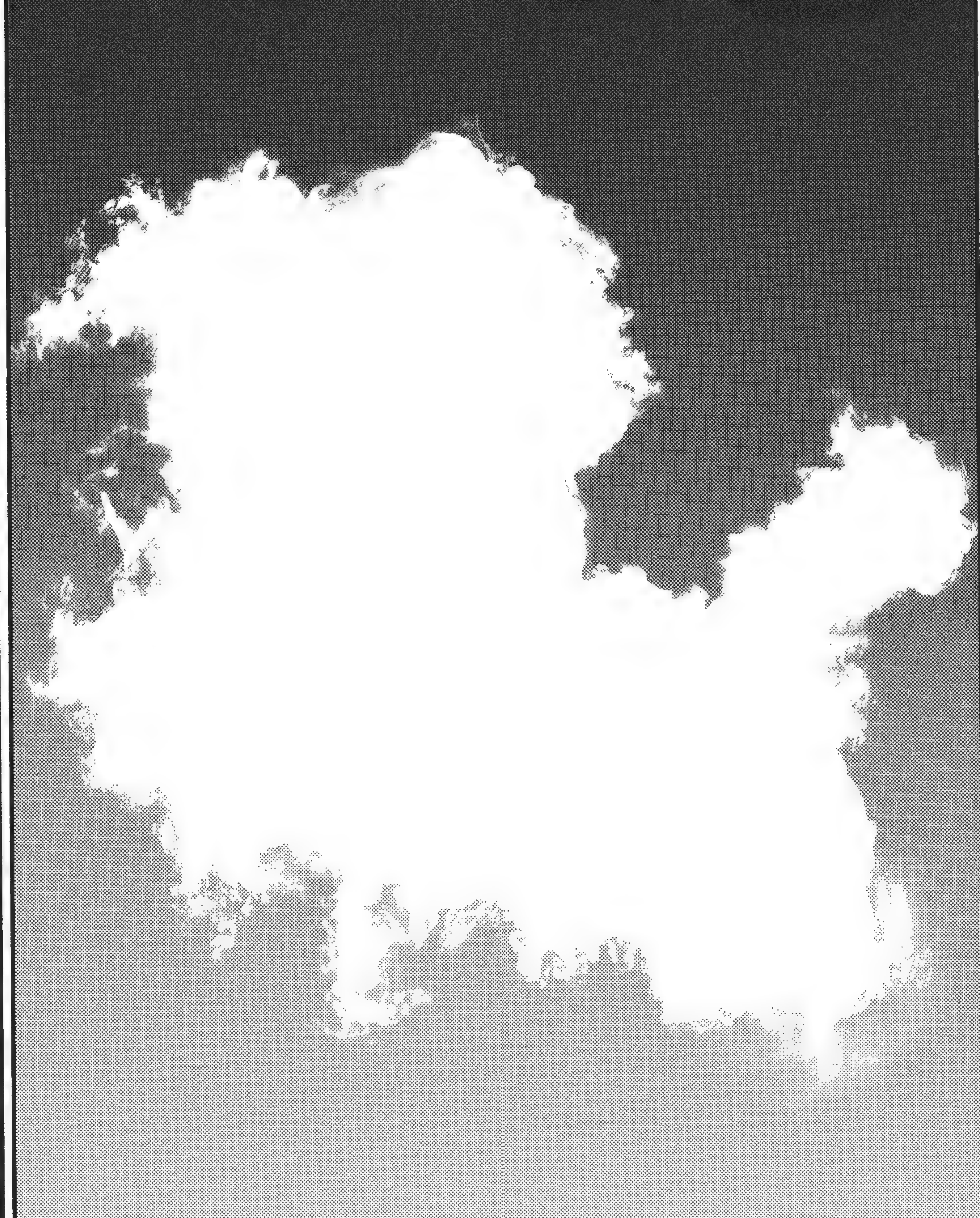
IT WAS
LIKE
MICHIKO
HERSELF...



I
COULDN'T
STOP
CRYING.



.....





AFTER THAT,
I...I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED.



I'D DRINK MYSELF
STUPID AT SOME
BAR, THEN GET
VIOLENT AND PICK
FIGHTS.



DROWNED
MYSELF IN
LIQUOR.



I STOPPED
PAYING
ATTENTION
TO MY
DAUGHTER.



POOR THING.
I CAUSED HER
NOTHING BUT
TROUBLE.



MY DAUGHTER
OFTEN HAD
TO PICK ME
UP FROM
THE POLICE
STATION.



I SHOWED
UP DRUNK AT
WORK, WENT
INTO THE
KITCHEN...

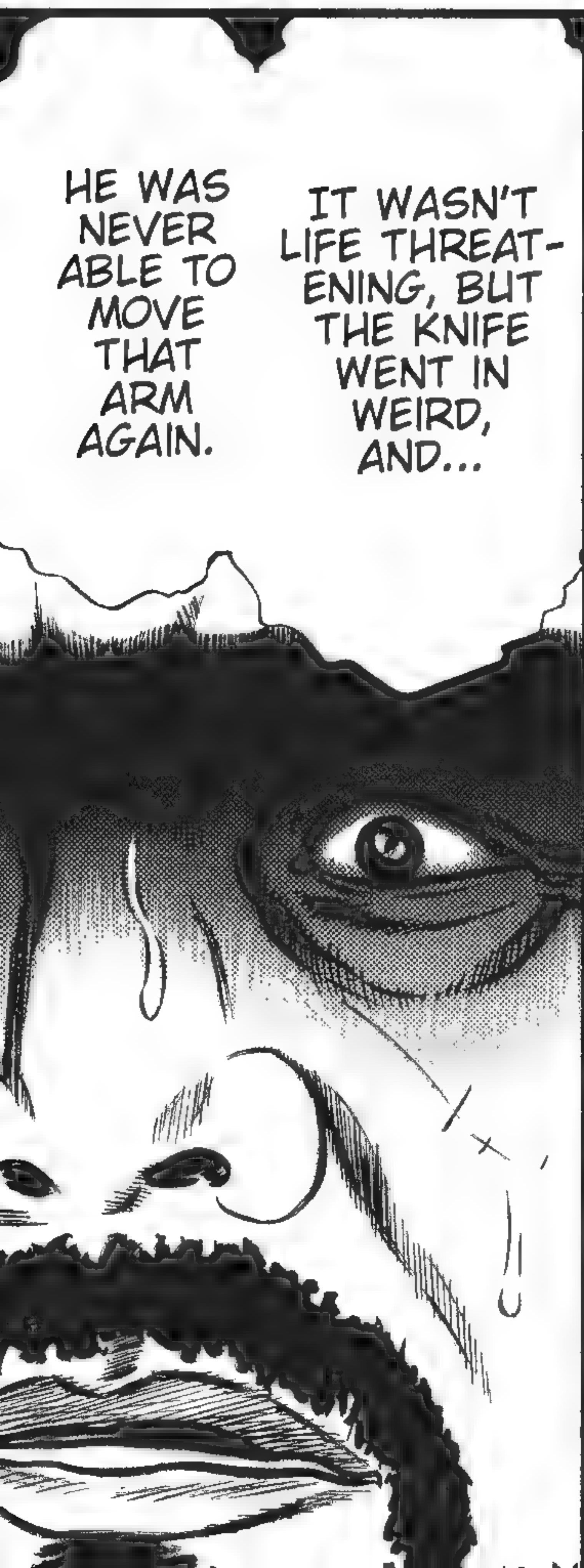


AND SPOKE
IN MY OLD
ACCENT BY
MISTAKE.

GOT INTO A
FIGHT WITH
A YOUNGER
WORKER...

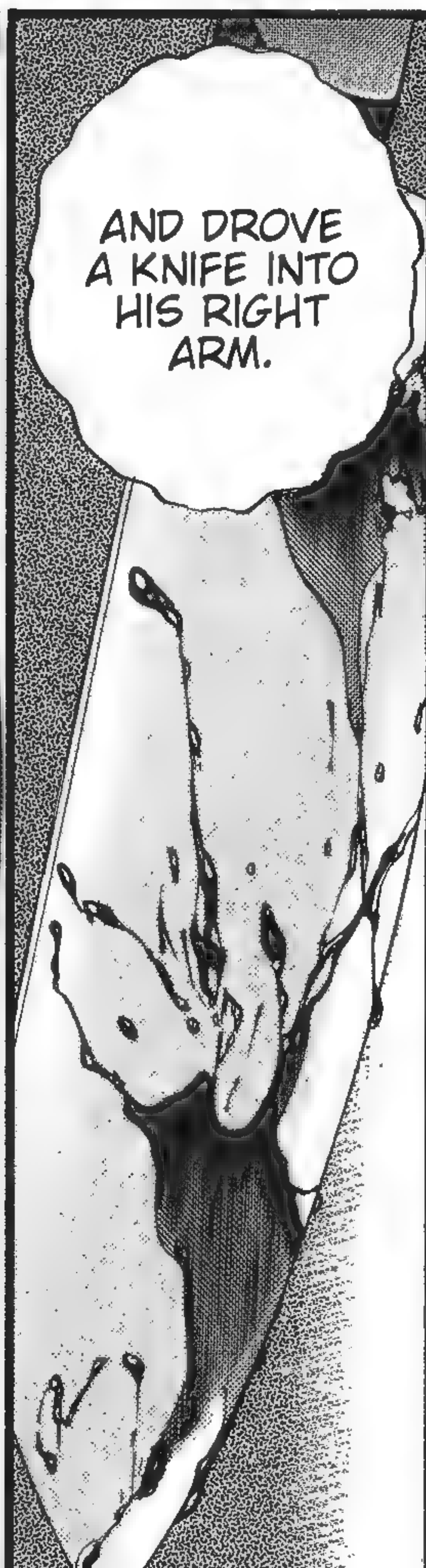


THEN,
ONE
DAY...



HE WAS
NEVER
ABLE TO
MOVE
THAT
ARM
AGAIN.

IT WASN'T
LIFE THREAT-
ENING, BUT
THE KNIFE
WENT IN
WEIRD,
AND...



AND DROVE
A KNIFE INTO
HIS RIGHT
ARM.



THAT LITTLE
PUNK MADE
FUN OF IT, SO I
FLEW OFF THE
HANDLE...



MY
DAUGHTER.



THE
ONLY ONE
WAITING
FOR ME
WAS...

WHEN
I GOT
OUT...



I SPENT
A YEAR IN
PRISON FOR
THAT.



SO, WITH NO
JOB, I WENT
RIGHT BACK
TO DRINKING
AND RACKED
UP ALL KINDS
OF DEBT.

AT THAT
POINT,
NOTHING
SEEMED TO
MATTER
ANYMORE.



EVERY
TIME I
TRIED, I
WOULD
TREMBLE...



I
WAS TOO
SCARED
TO EVEN
HOLD A
KNIFE
AGAIN.

BUT I
COULDN'T
COOK
ANYMORE.



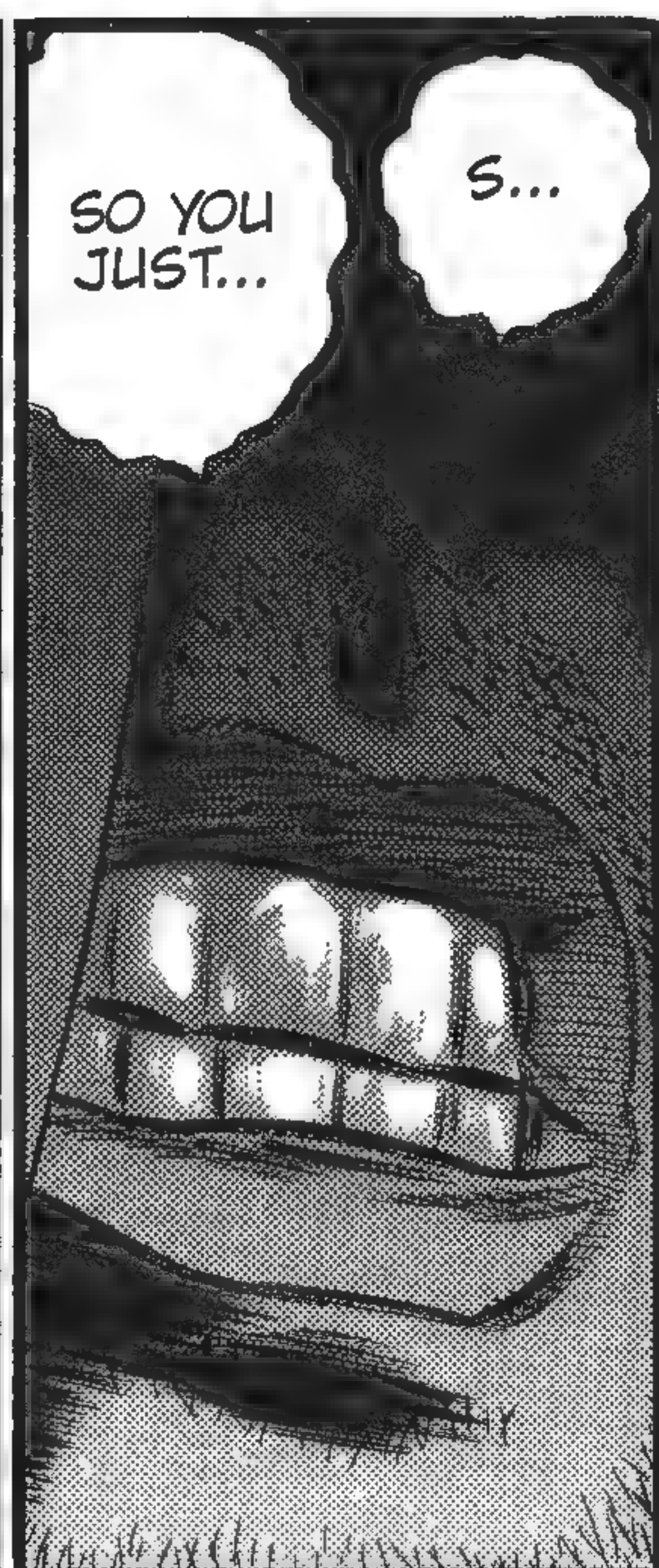
ALL I
TOOK
WITH ME
WAS THAT
KNIFE.

KEPT IT IN
MY JACKET
POCKET
IN CASE I
WANTED
TO DIE.



I RAN
AWAY.

YEAH.



SO YOU
JUST...

S...



?



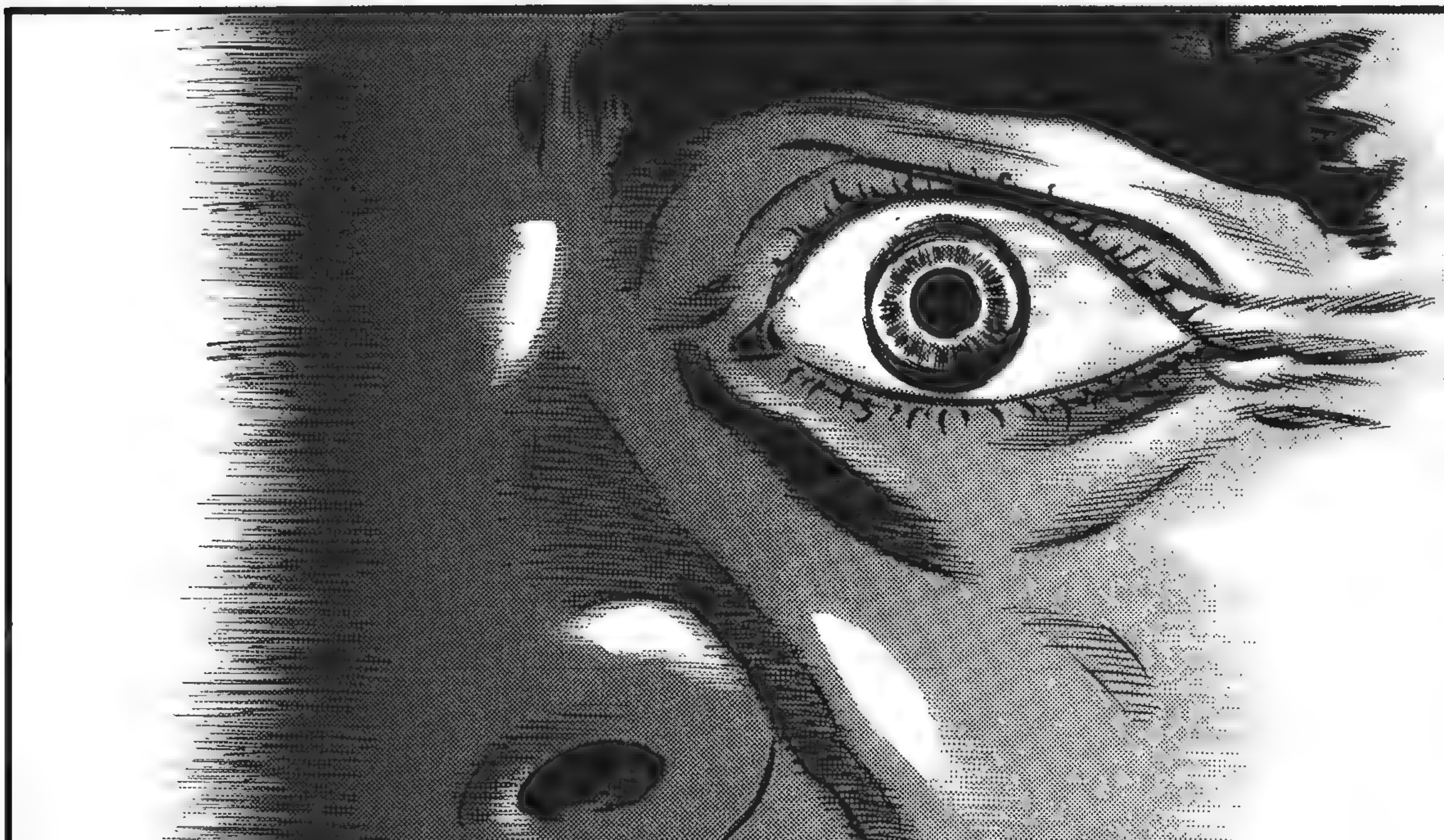
LEFT?

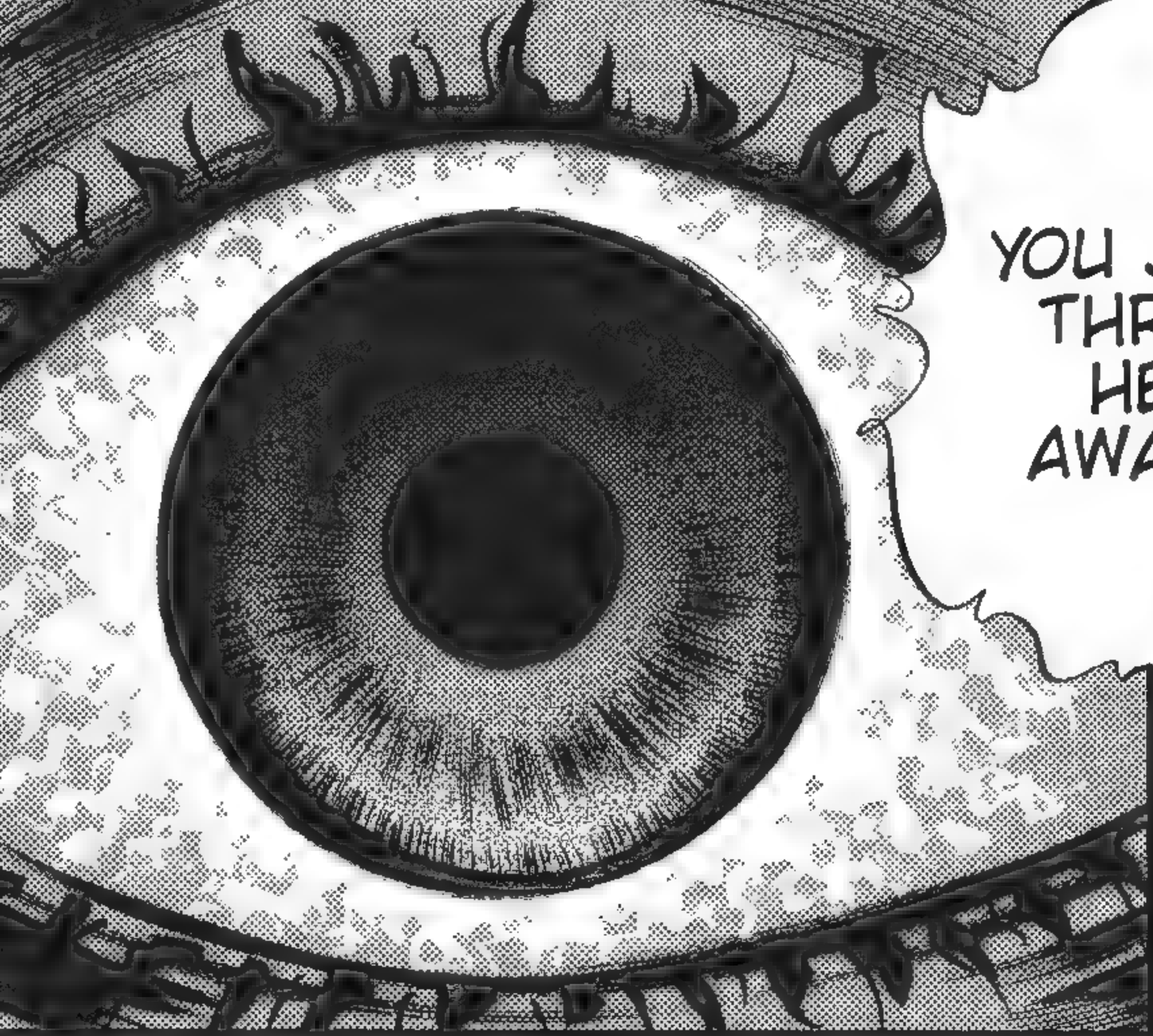


YOU
JUST...



YOU JUST
LEFT YOUR
DAUGHTER
ALL
ALONE?!!





YOU JUST
THREW
HER
AWAY?!



Y...



GNH
...

ERGH
...!



!!
.....

GRIP



YOU!

YOU!

YOU!



HNGH
...



THREW
HER
AWAY?!

AND
YOU! YOU
JUST...

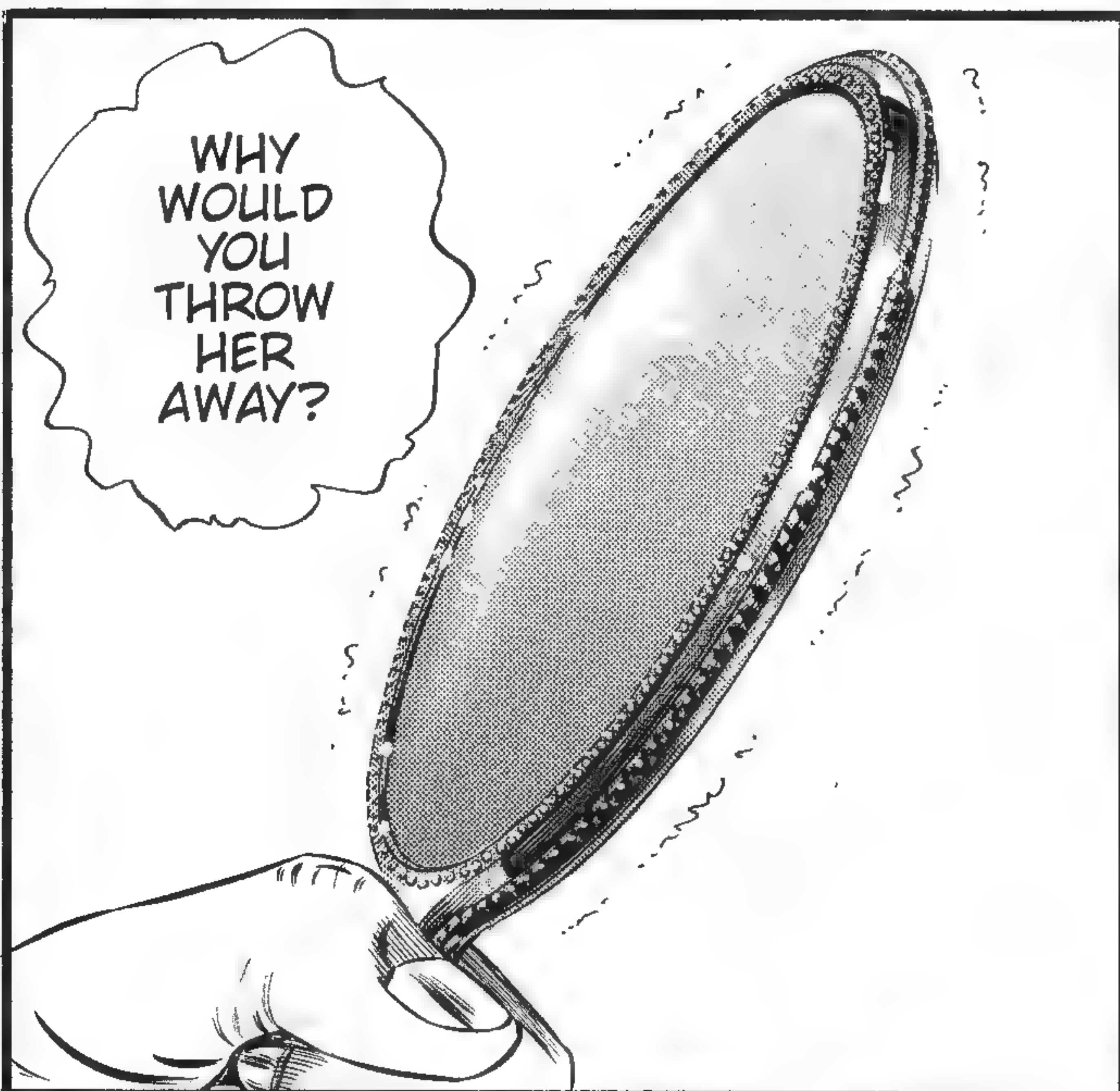


YOUR
DAUGHTER
WAS THE
ONLY ONE
WHO LOOKED
AT YOU...



SO YOU
JUST LOOKED
FOR SOME
MAKE-BELIEVE
ESCAPE ROUTE
IN THE CLOUDS.

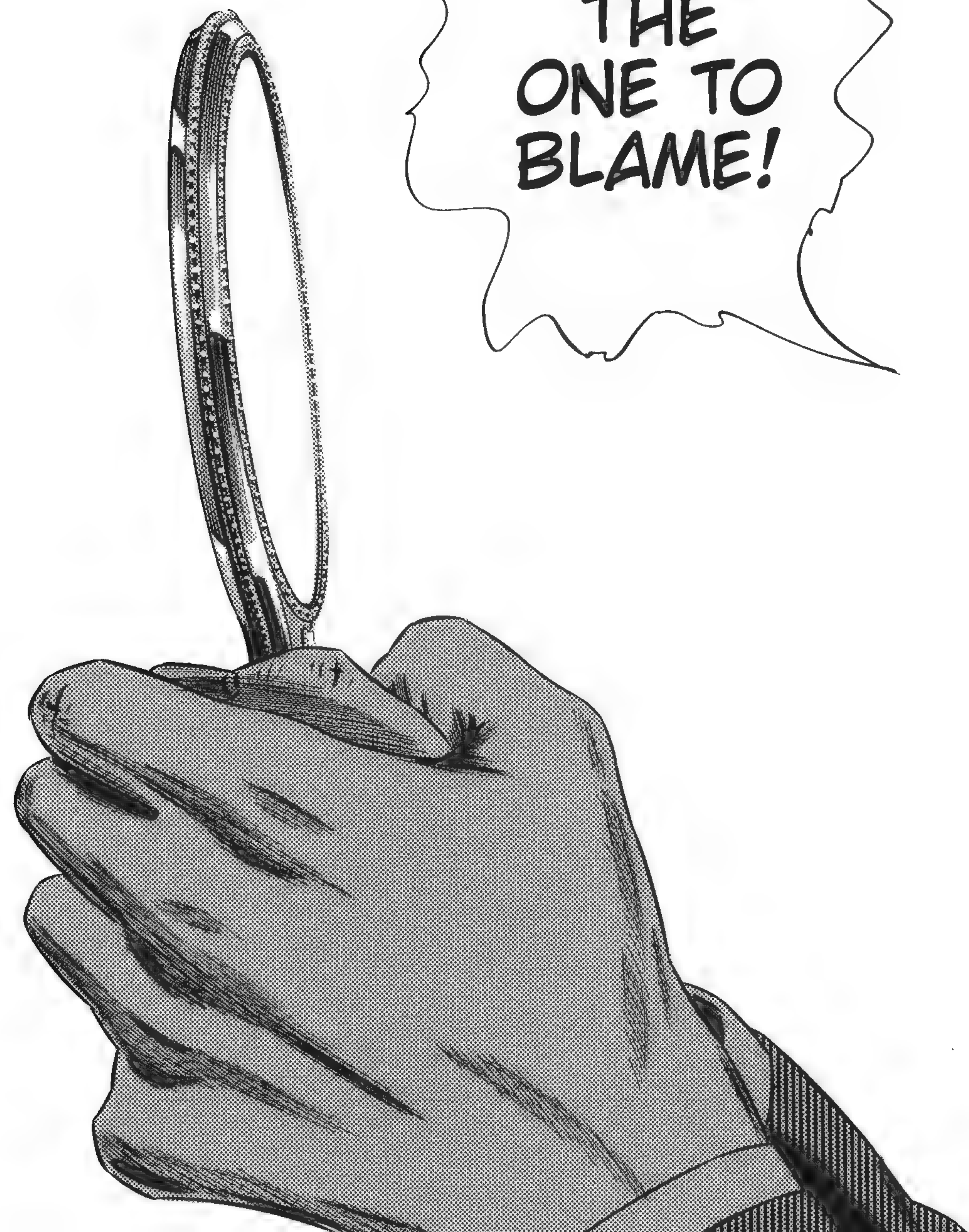
YOU COULDN'T
FACE REALITY
HEAD-ON...







**YOU'RE
THE
ONE TO
BLAME!**



A black and white manga-style illustration of a man's face reflected in an oval mirror. The man has a mustache and is crying, with two long tears streaming down his face. The mirror has a decorative, beaded border. To the left of the mirror is a dark, textured surface, possibly a curtain or wall.

SHE
WAS RIGHT
IN FRONT OF
YOU, AND YOU
NEVER SAW
HER.

A close-up, high-contrast black and white illustration of a single eye. The eye is looking down and has two long, thick tears falling from it. The surrounding skin is shaded with fine lines.

YOU LET
YOURSELF BE
BLINDED BY
THE OTHER
SIDE'S LIES.

A solid black rectangular panel. In the center, there is a white circular speech bubble. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

YOU THREW
AWAY YOUR
ONLY HEART.



YOU DID
THIS TO
YOURSELF.

YOU RAN
AWAY...

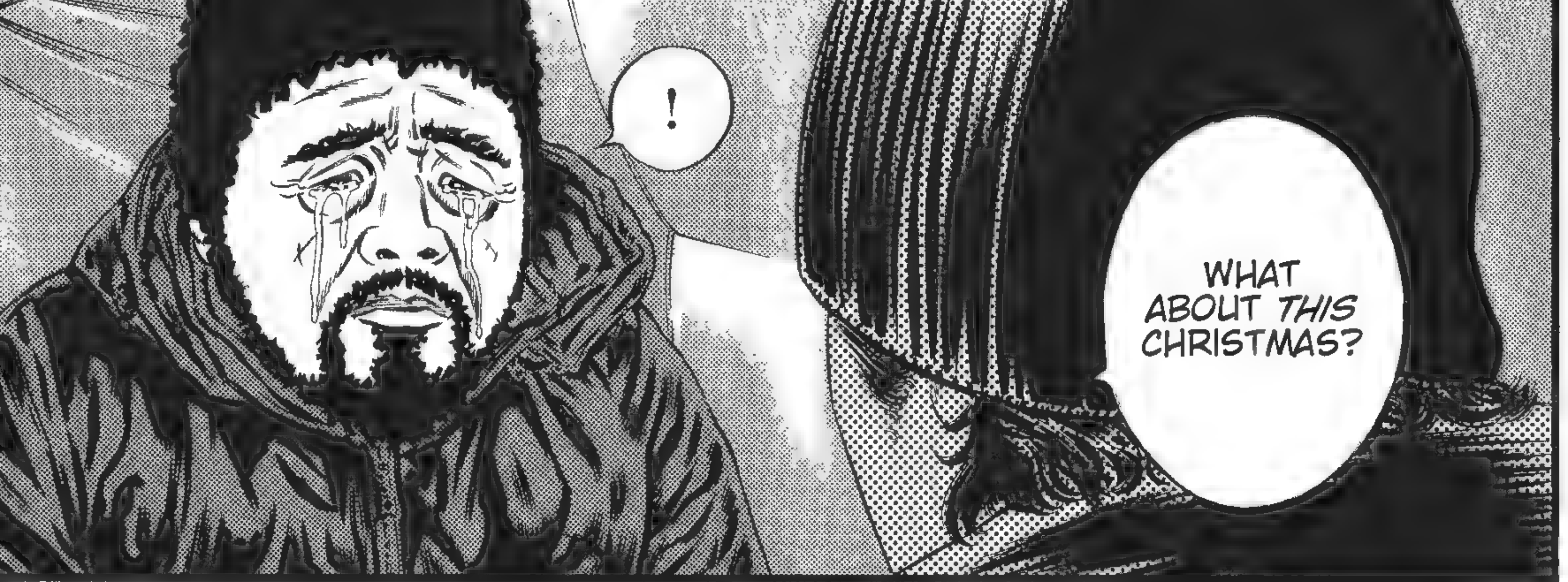
INTO A
WORLD
OF FALSE-
HOODS.



IT'S ONLY
NATURAL...

THAT A GUY
LIKE YOU
WOULD HAVE
NOWHERE TO
GO HOME TO!

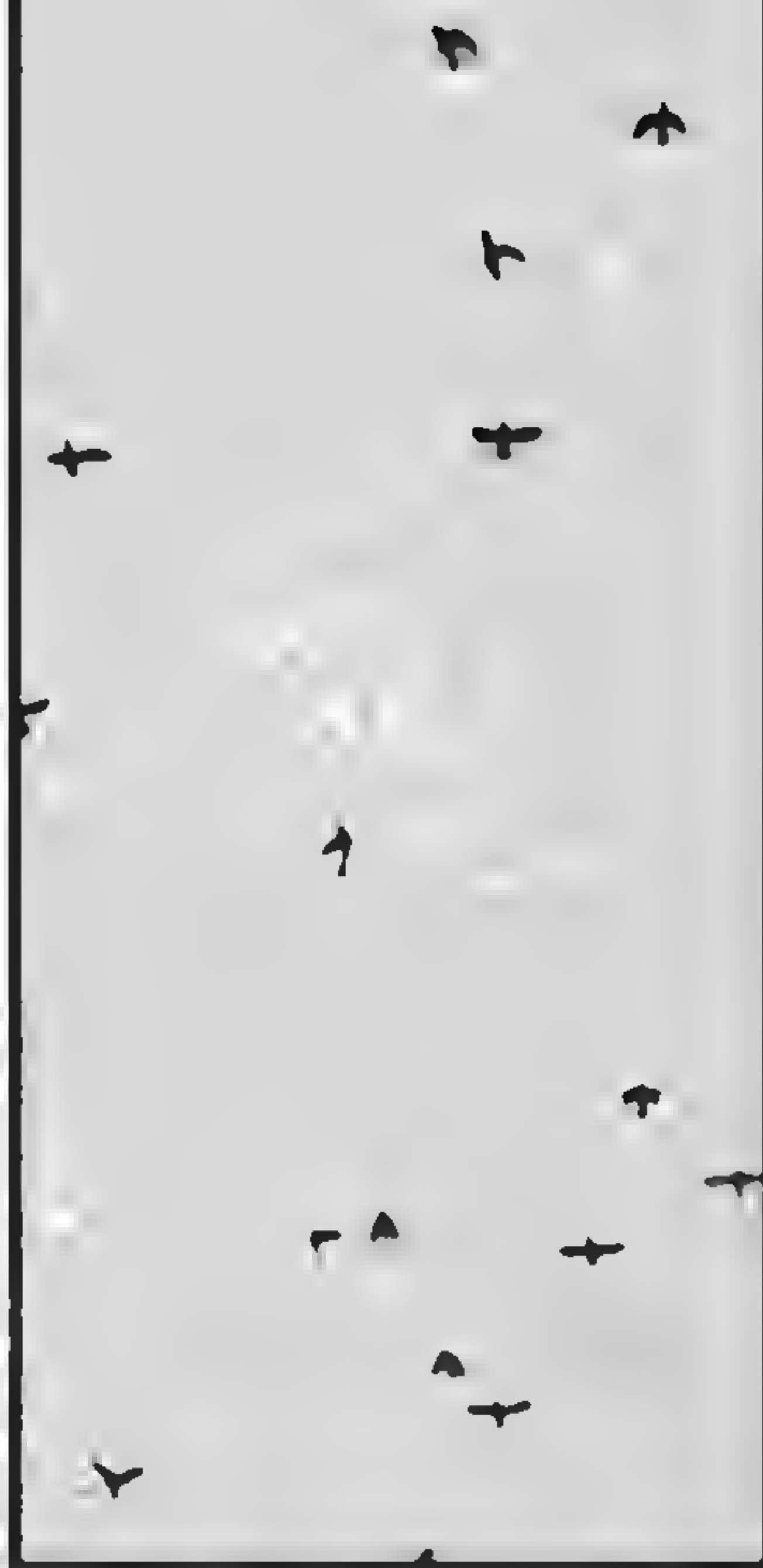








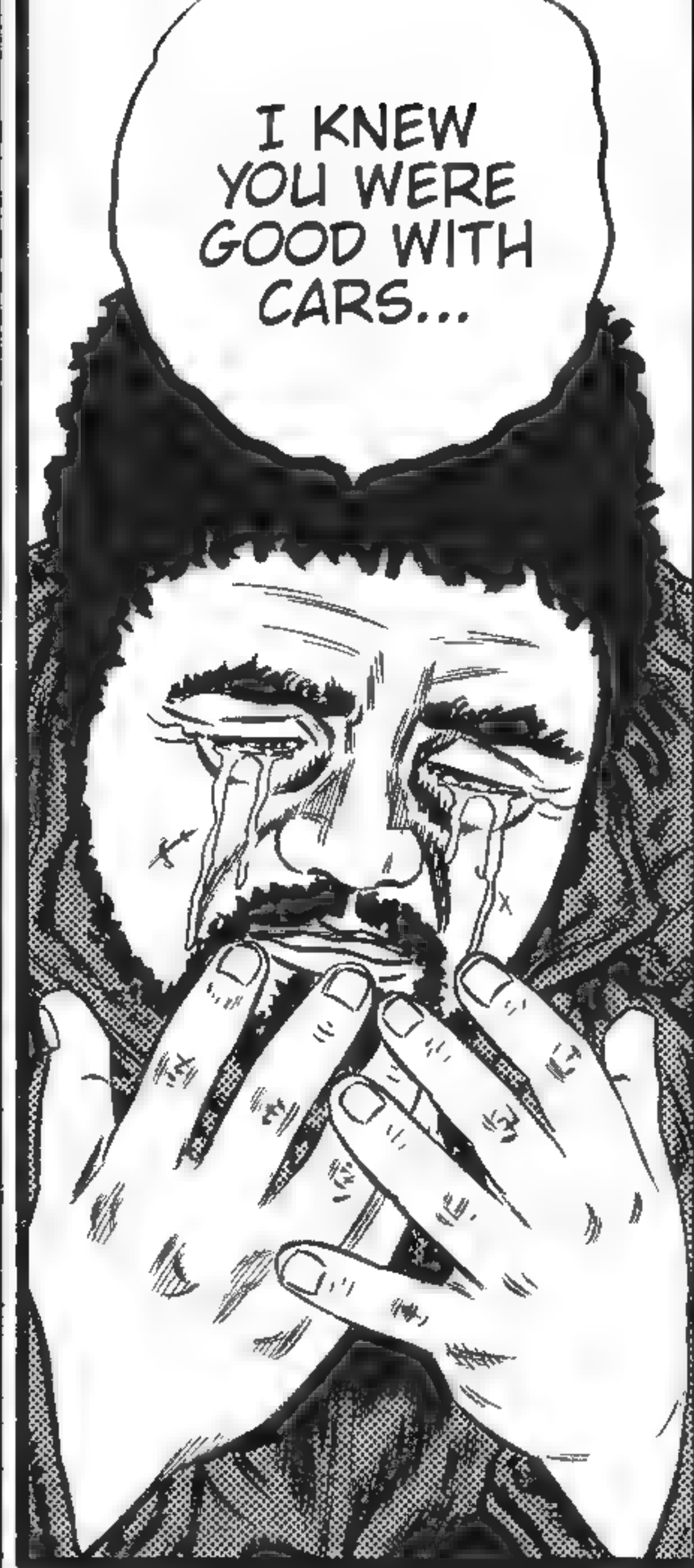








BUT DOES YOUR
POWER TO "FEEL"
WHAT'S WRONG
WITH SOMETHING
WORK ON HUMANS
TOO?

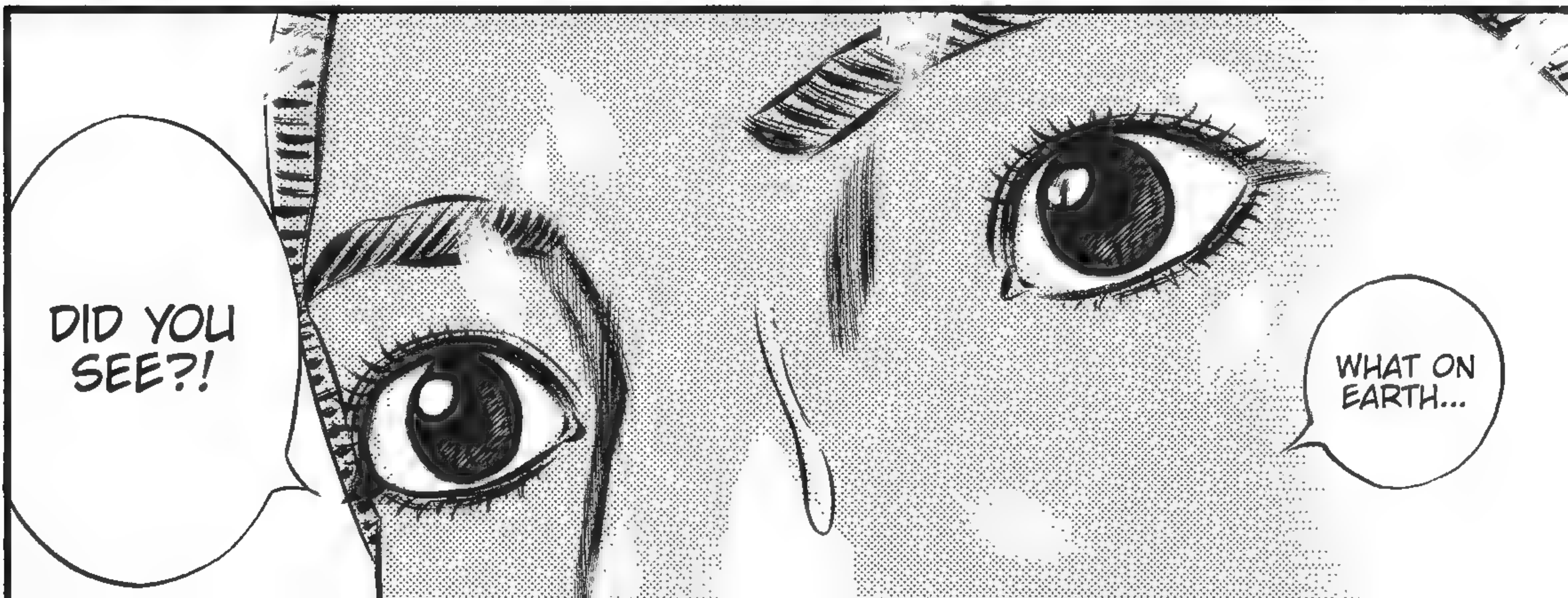


I KNEW
YOU WERE
GOOD WITH
CARS...



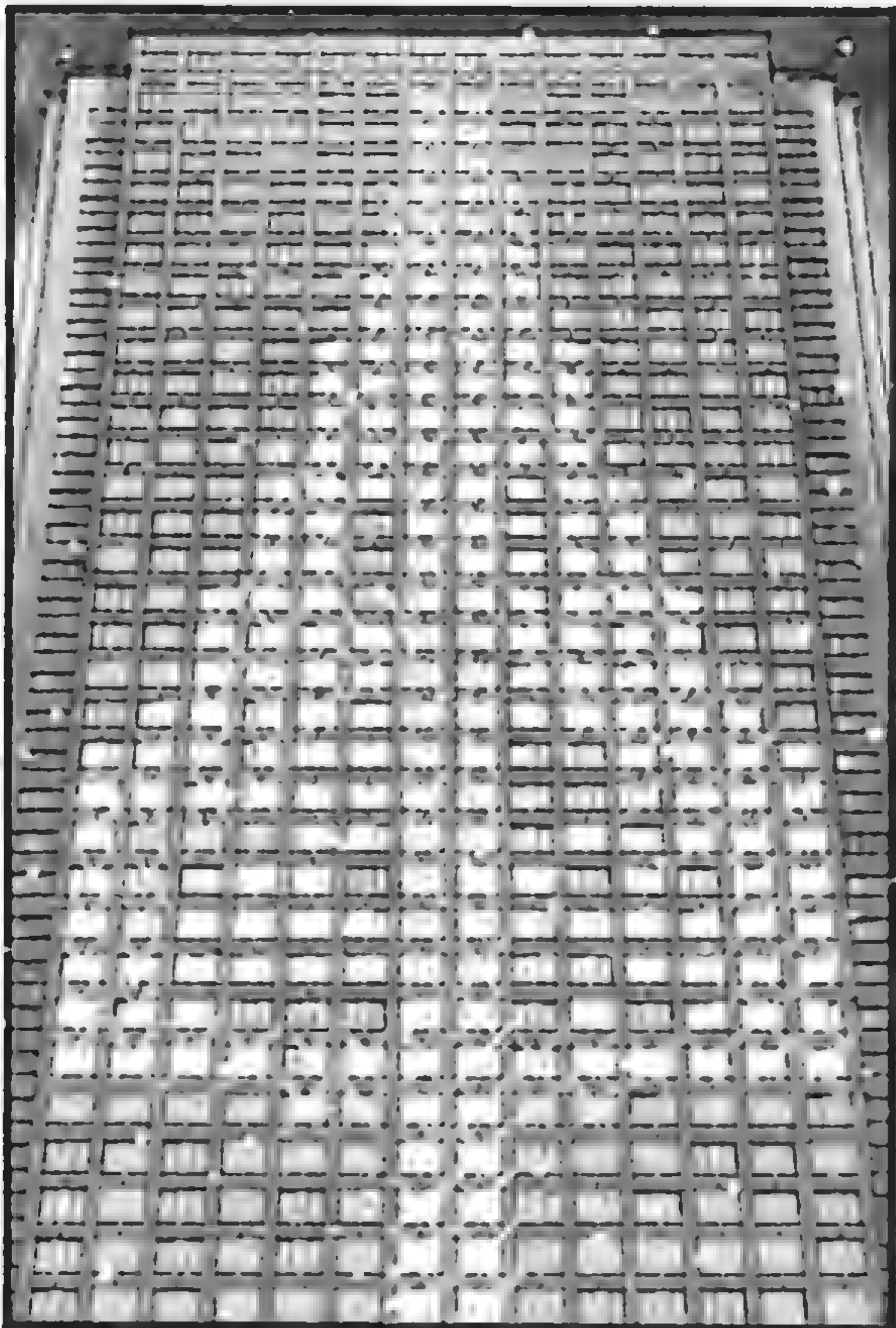
NAH.
A CAR'S
JUST A
MACHINE.

THEY'RE
NOTHING
LIKE
PEOPLE.











WHERE
AM I
SUPPOSED
TO GO
FROM
HERE?



WHERE
WILL I
GO?



WHERE
WILL
I...?



Hideo Yamamoto

Born in 1968, in Saitama Prefecture.

Hideo Yamamoto is his real name.

Assistant experience: Kenshi Hirokane-sensei,
Ikuko Kujirai-sensei.

Works: *SHEEP*, *Okama Hakusho*, *Voyeur*, *Ichi the Killer*, *Homunculus*, *HIKARI-MAN*.

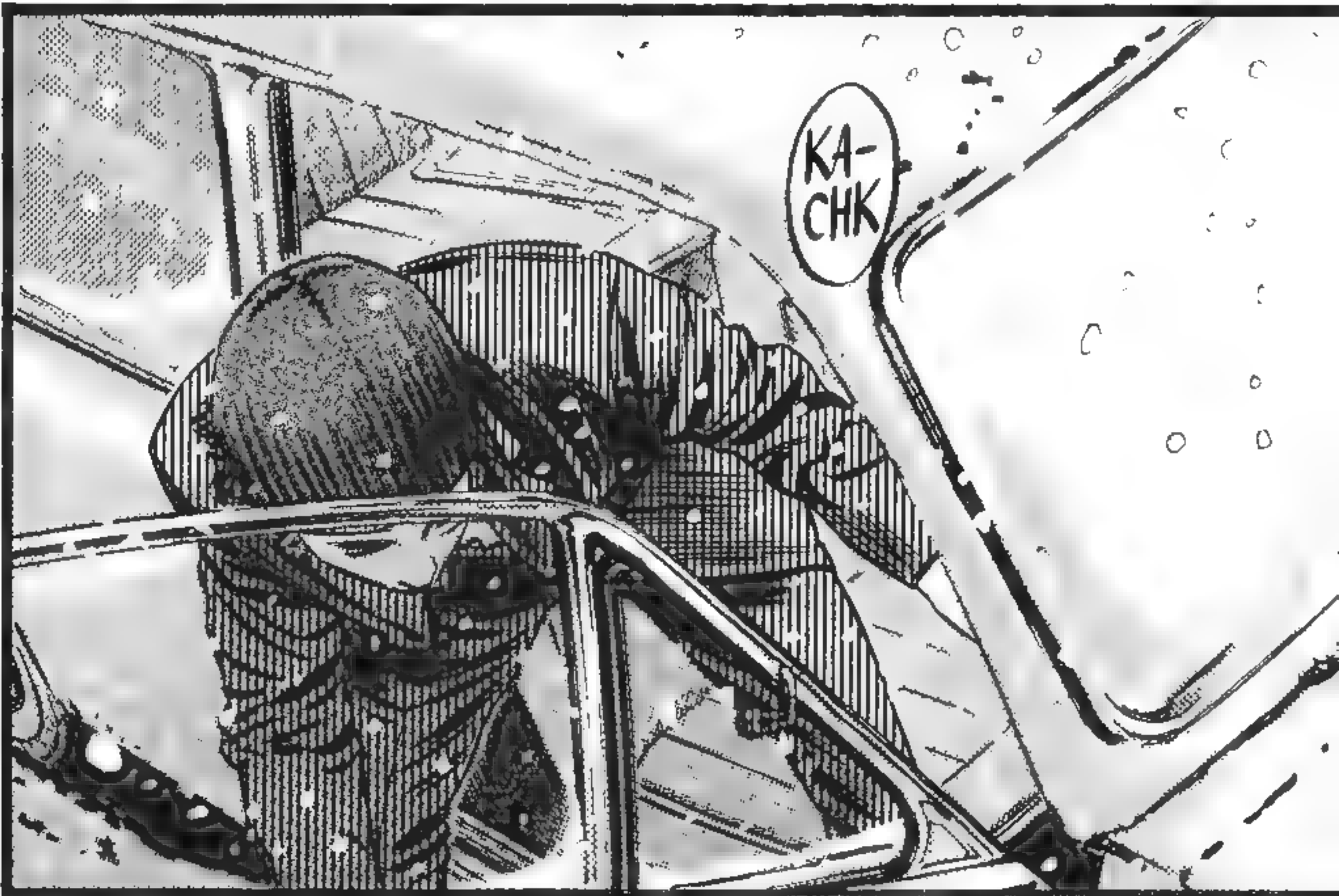


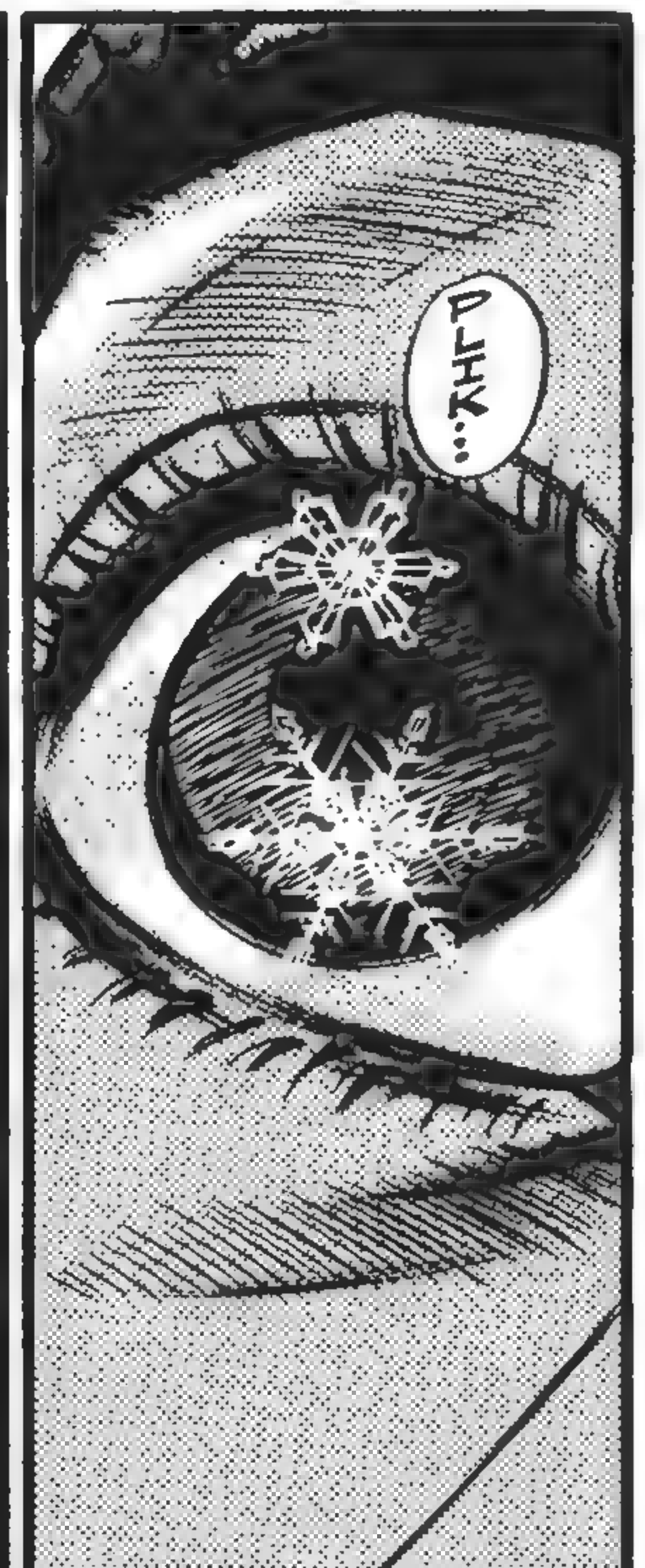
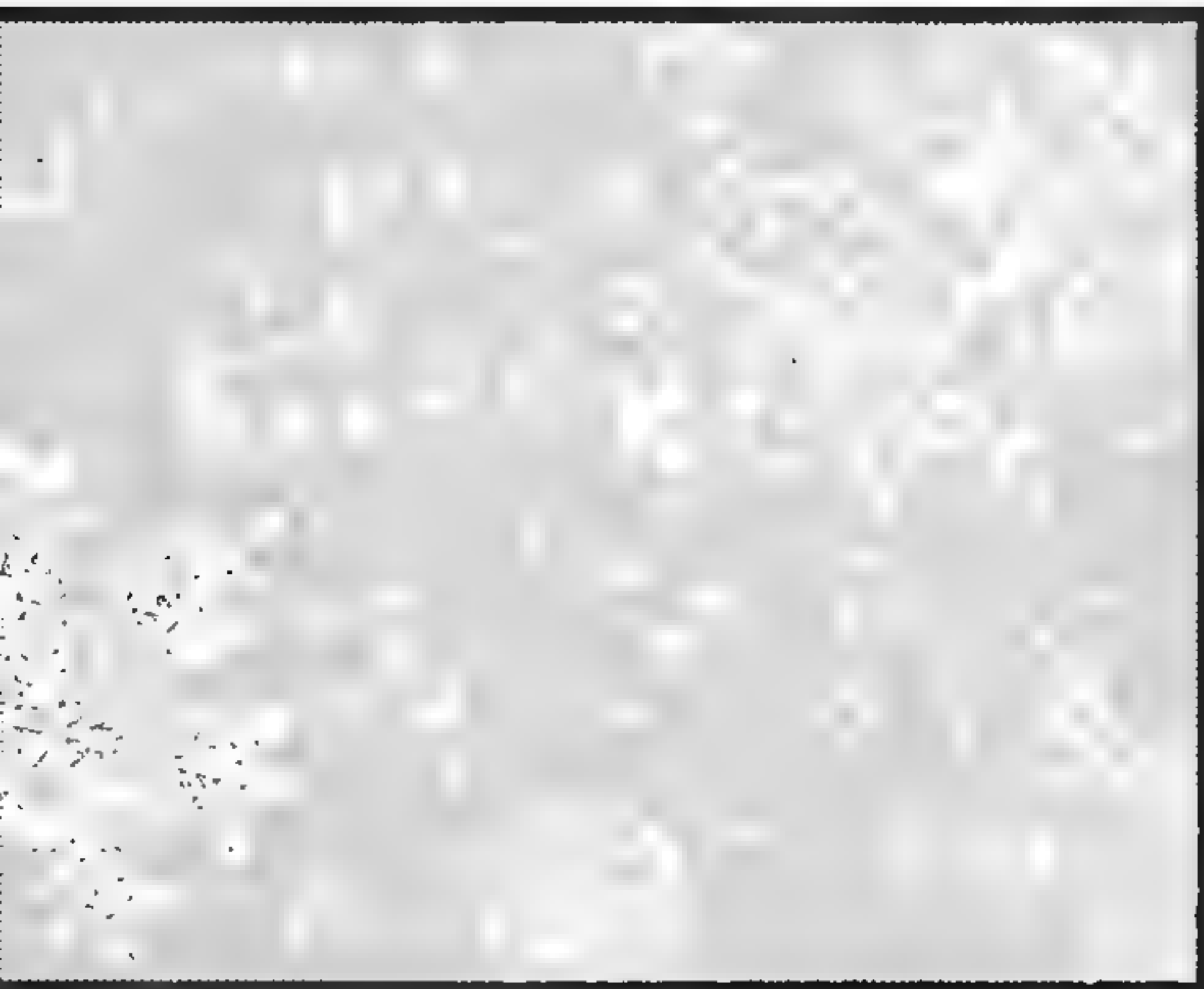
Homunculus



Volume 10





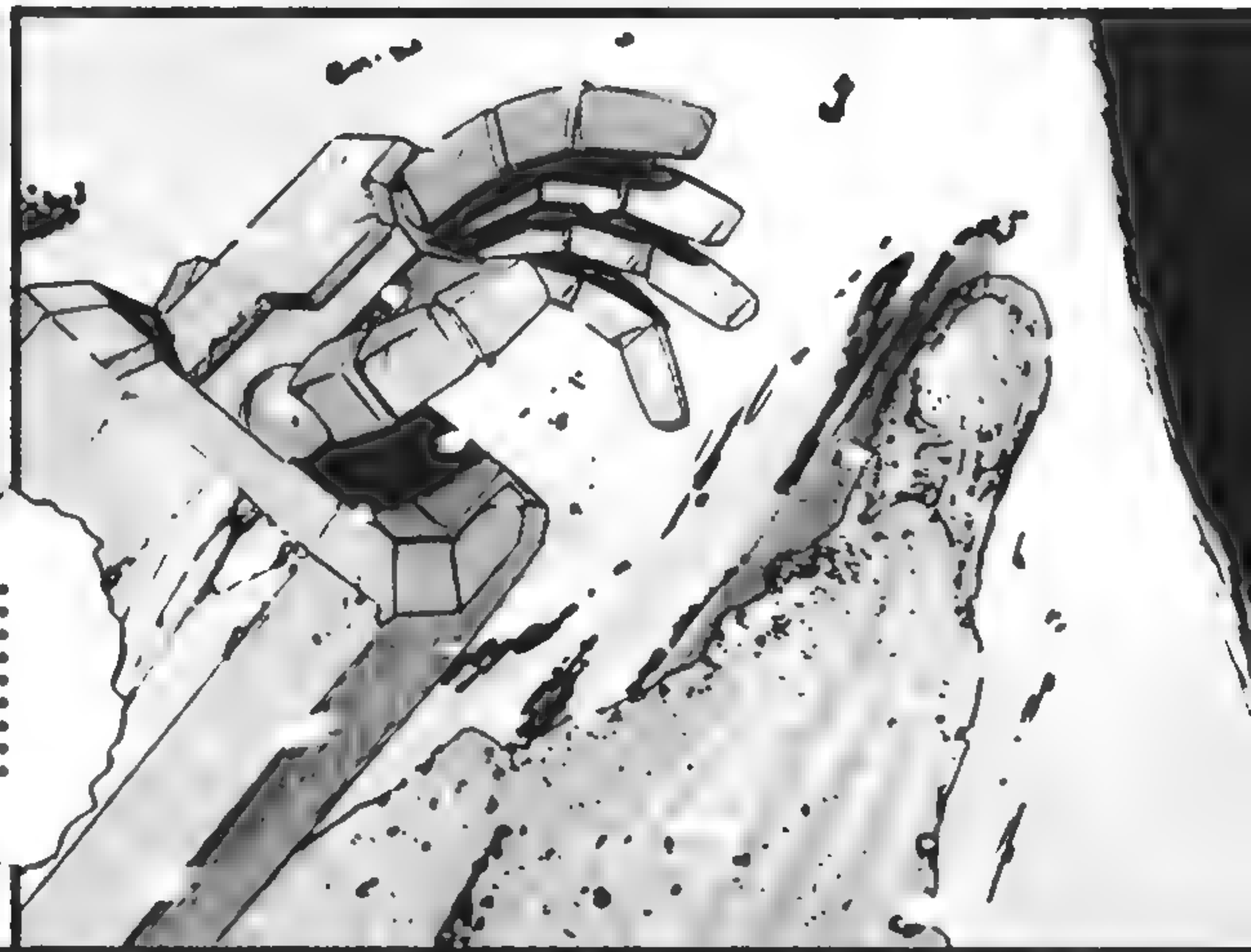
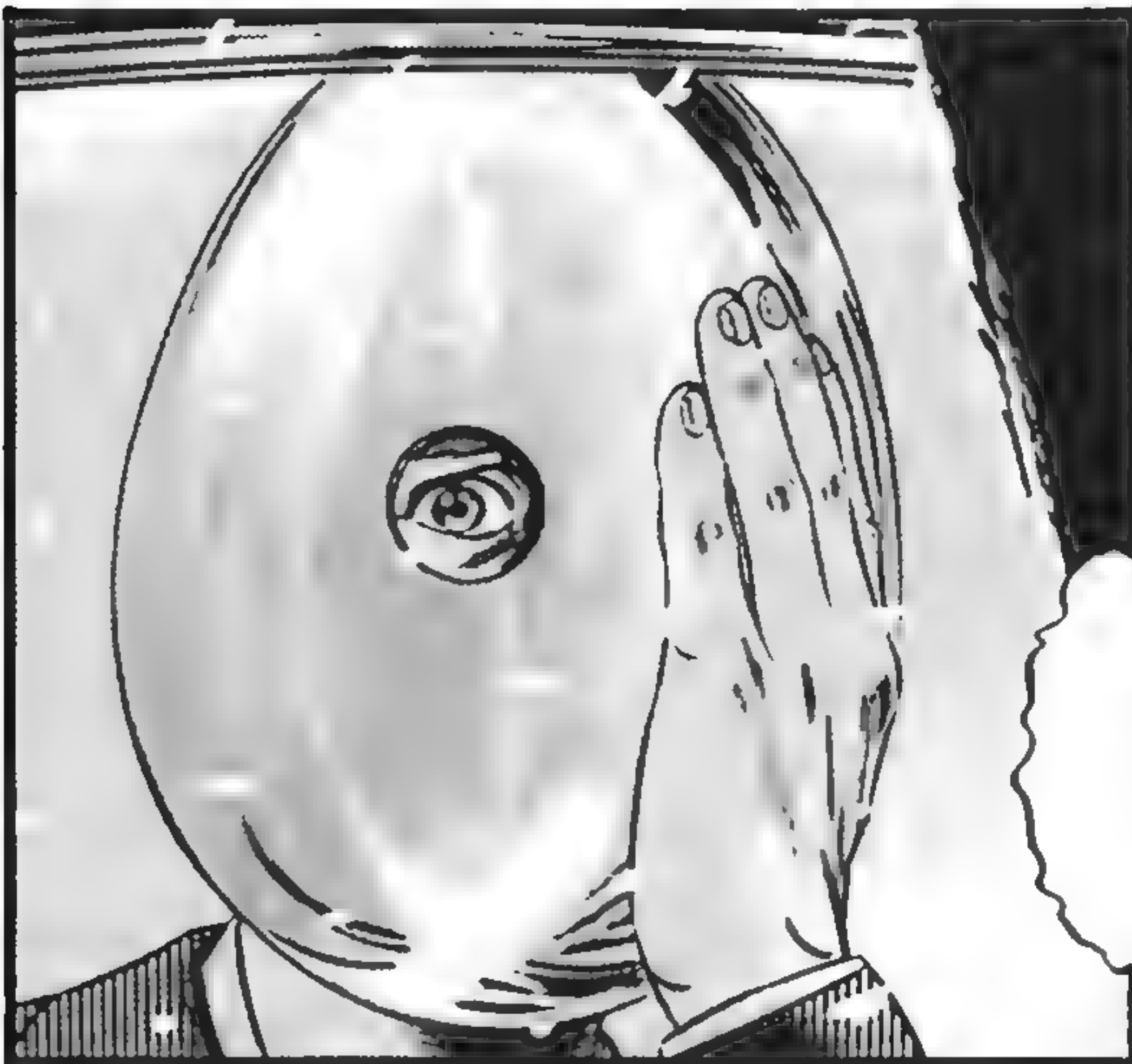
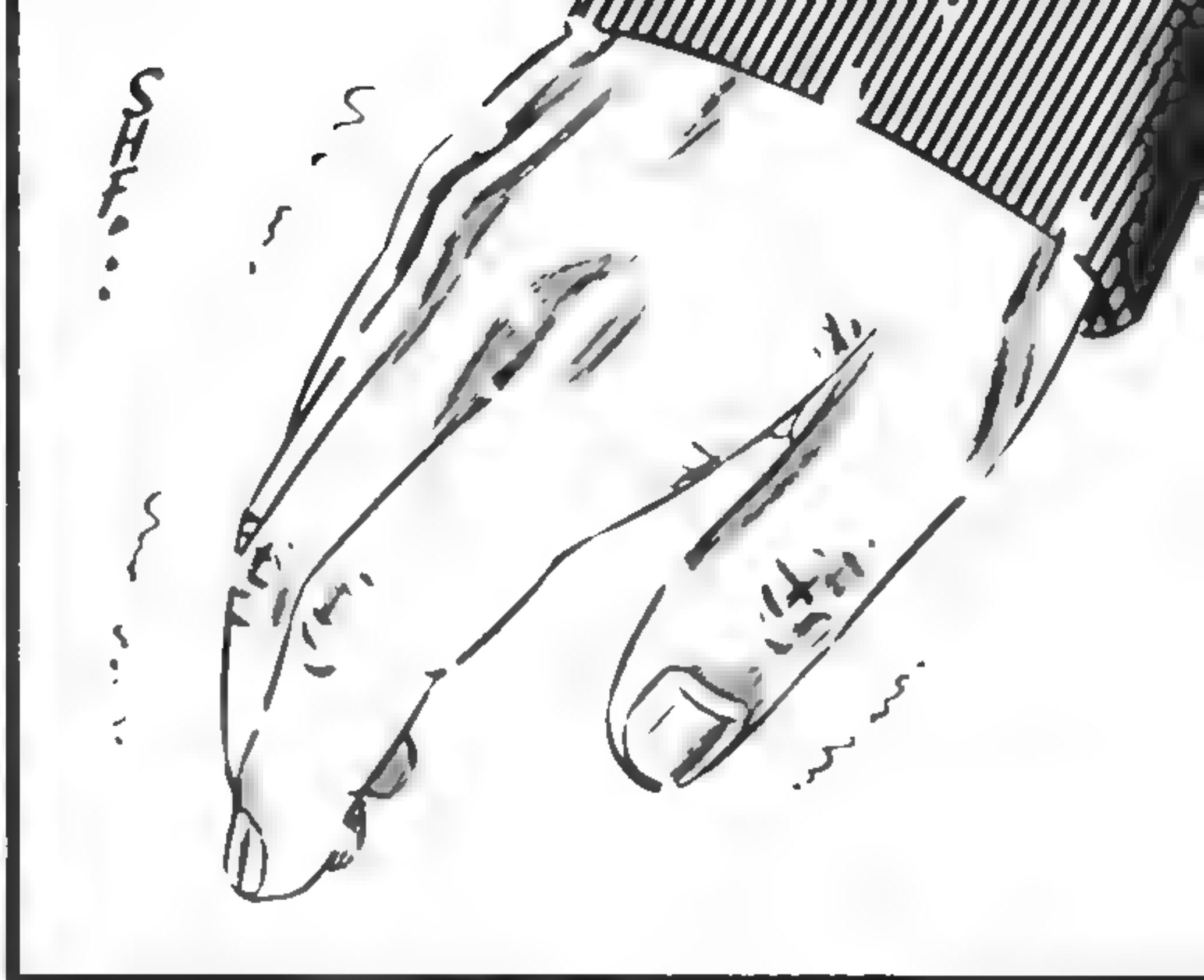


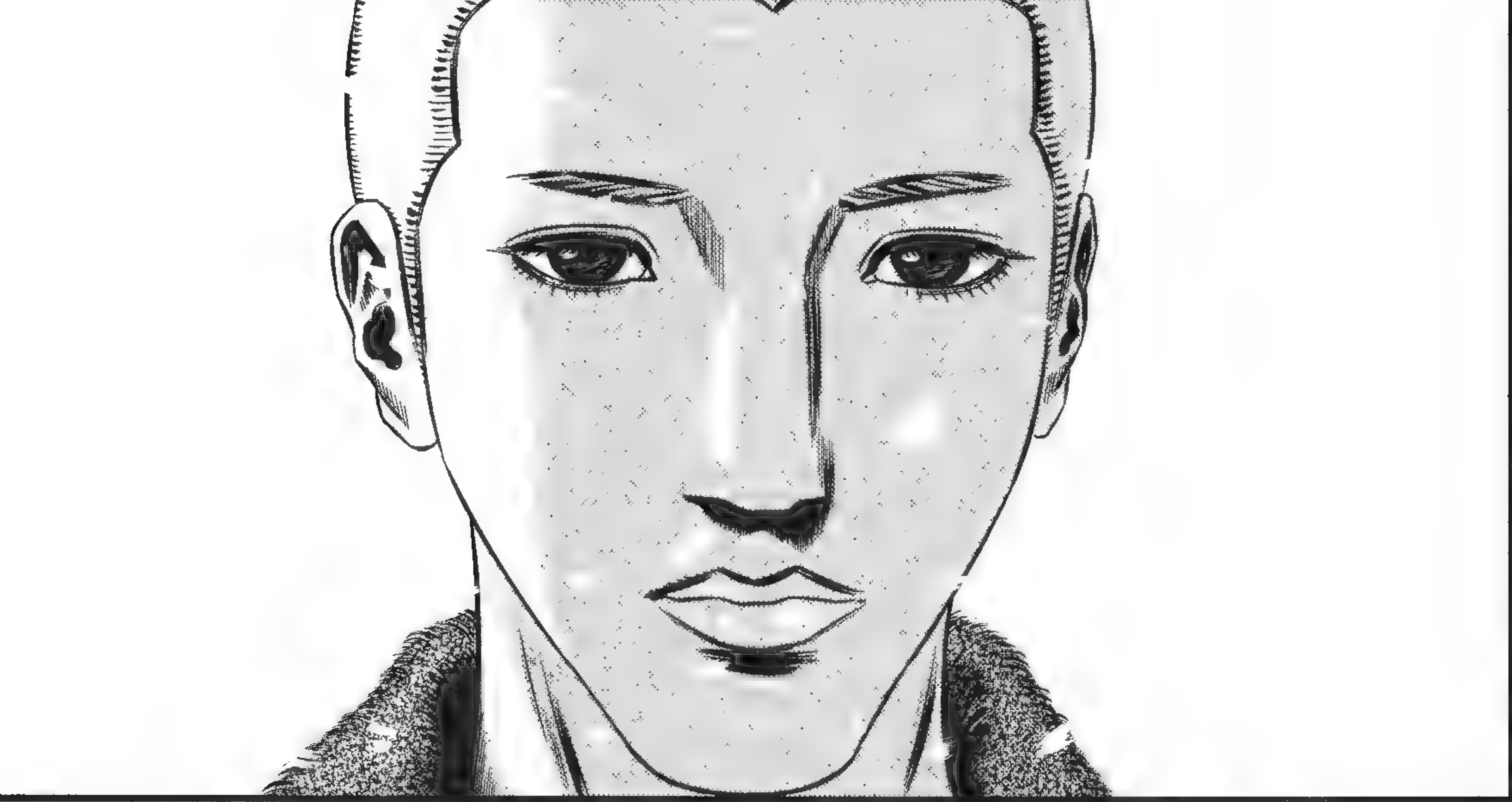


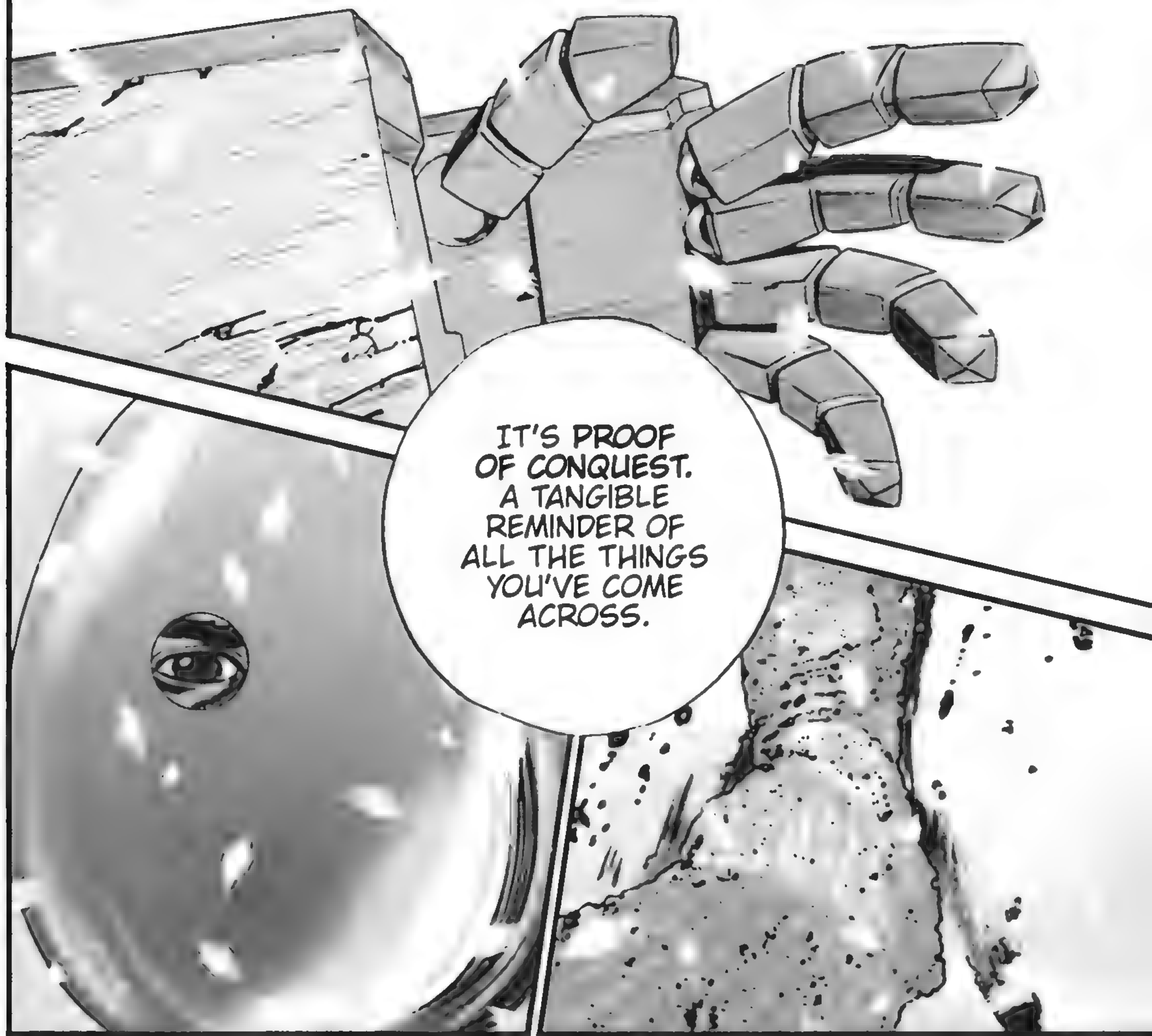












IT'S PROOF
OF CONQUEST.
A TANGIBLE
REMINDER OF
ALL THE THINGS
YOU'VE COME
ACROSS.



BOASTING
ABOUT WHAT
YOU'VE
SEEN.

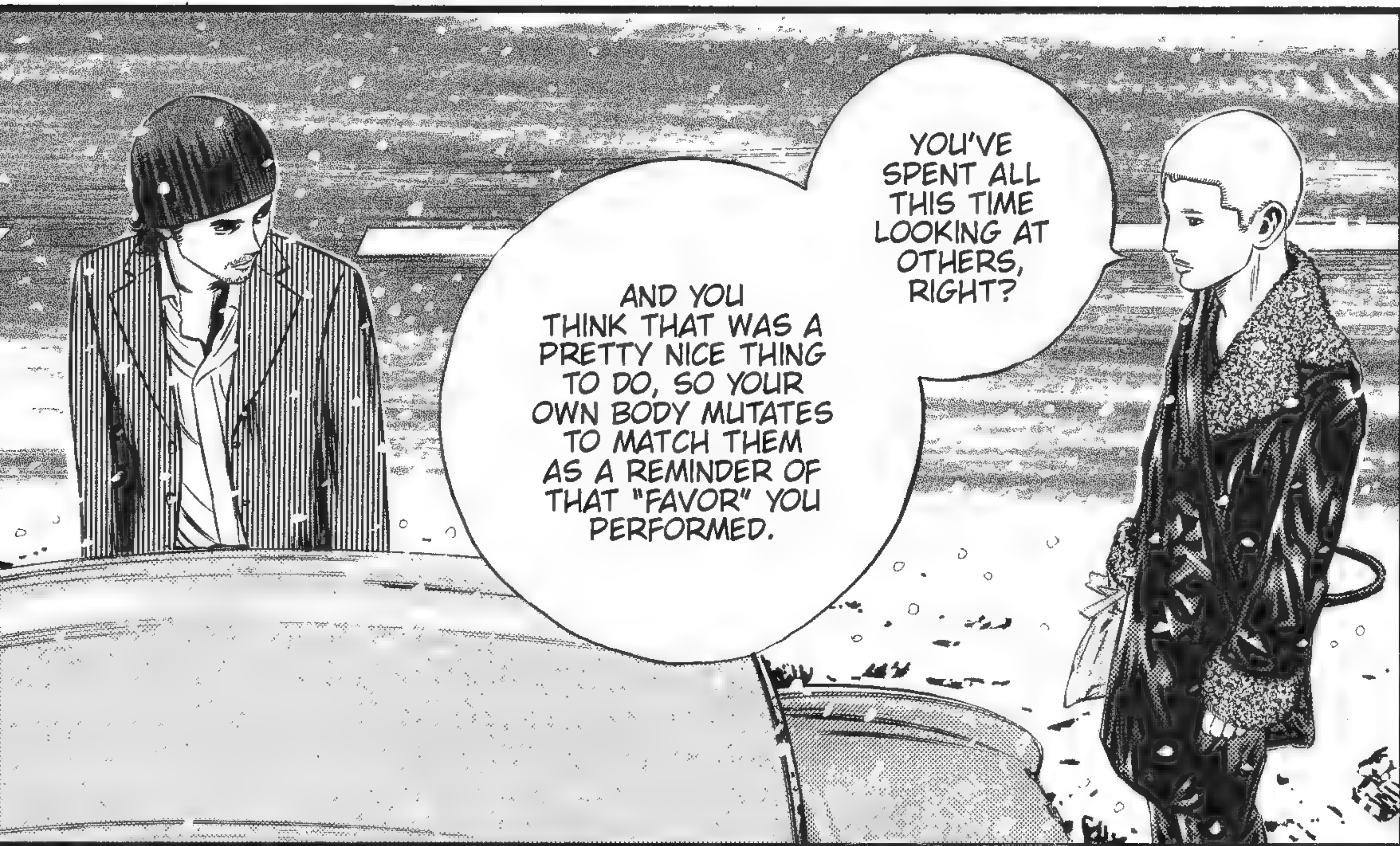
A PHYSICAL
MANIFESTA-
TION OF
YOUR OWN
EGO...



WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?



WH...



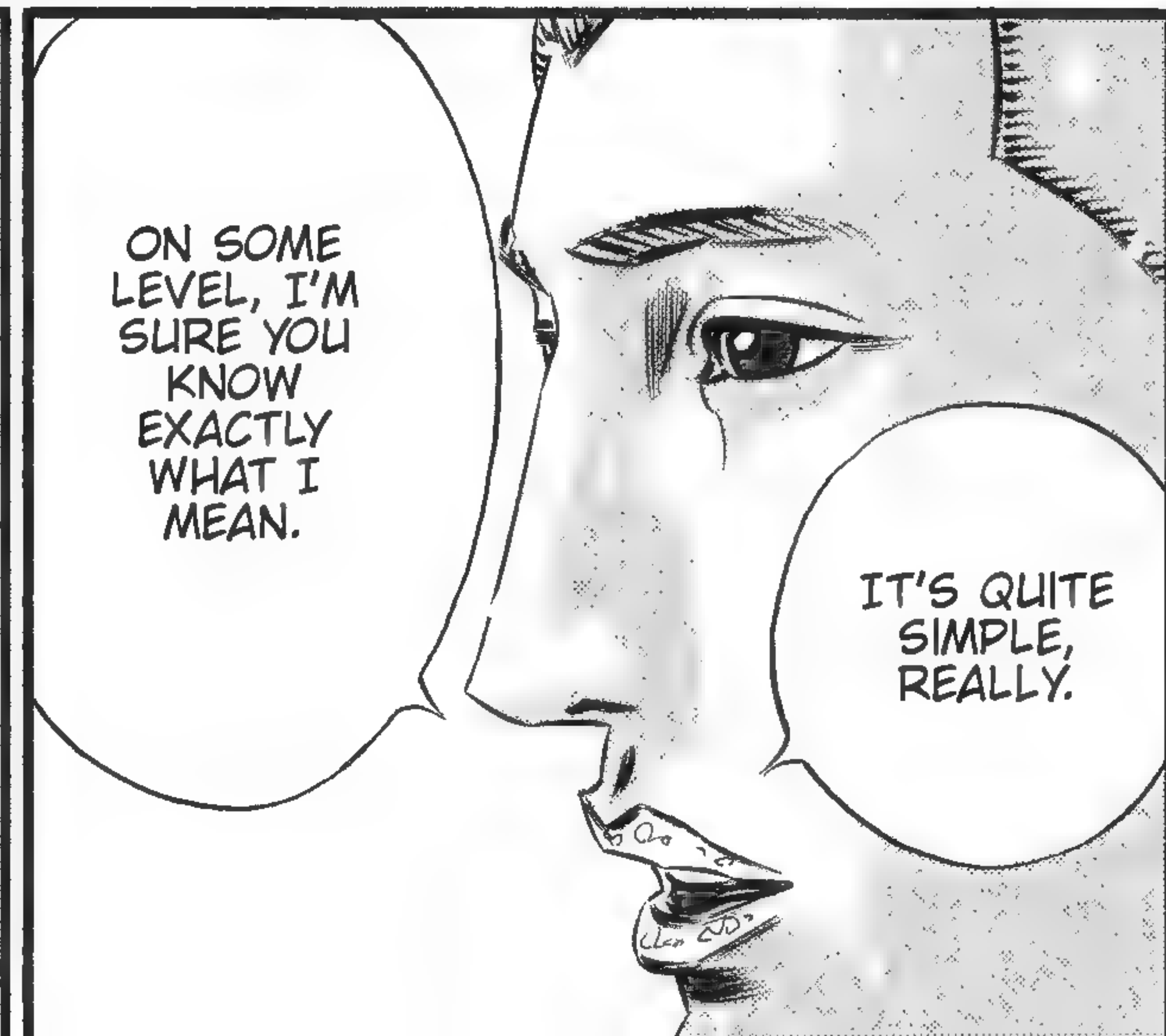
AND YOU
THINK THAT WAS A
PRETTY NICE THING
TO DO, SO YOUR
OWN BODY MUTATES
TO MATCH THEM
AS A REMINDER OF
THAT "FAVOR" YOU
PERFORMED.

YOU'VE
SPENT ALL
THIS TIME
LOOKING AT
OTHERS,
RIGHT?



THE
HELL I
DO!

TH...



ON SOME
LEVEL, I'M
SURE YOU
KNOW
EXACTLY
WHAT I
MEAN.

IT'S QUITE
SIMPLE,
REALLY.



YOU DESERVE
TO BE REWARDED
FOR IT. THE CHANGES
IN YOUR BODY ARE
MANIFESTATIONS OF
YOUR SECRET HOPE--
AND EXPECTATION--
THAT THEY'LL LOOK
AT YOU IN RETURN.

OH, COME ON.
YOU THINK
LOOKING AT
THEM WAS SO
GRACIOUS...



TO BE
SEEN IN
RETURN.



YOU WANT
TO BE REPAID
FOR YOUR
KINDNESS.

IT'S A SIDE
EFFECT OF HAVING
"LOOKED" AT SO
MANY OTHERS.
NOTHING MORE.



THAT'S WHY THEIR DISTORTIONS ARE MANIFESTING ON YOUR BODY LIKE THAT.

THAT'S JUST IT. YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK THE URGE.



I'VE NEVER ONCE ASKED ANYONE TO LOOK AT ME AS "PAYMENT"!

THIS WHOLE TIME...



YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR DAMN MIND!

Y...



NO WAY!



WANTING A REWARD FOR THAT SOUNDS GRIMY AS HELL! THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS!





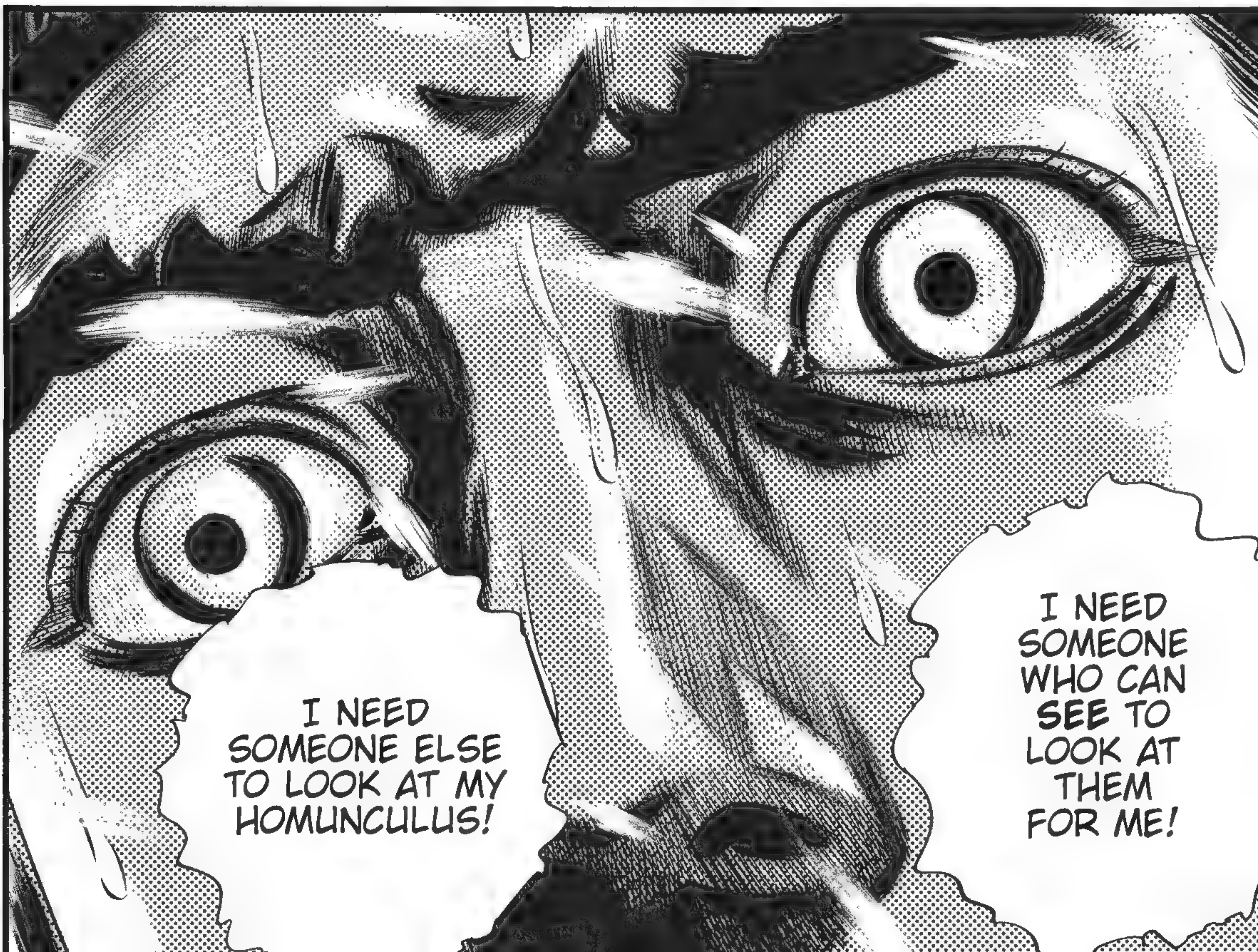
THESE
TWISTED
THINGS....!

THERE
HAS TO BE
SOME HIDDEN
MESSAGE IN
THEM!



BESIDES,
YOU
CAN'T SEE
ANYTHING
LIKE WHAT
I SEE!

HOW
COULD
YOU KNOW
WHAT
THEY
REALLY
MEAN?!



I NEED
SOMEONE ELSE
TO LOOK AT MY
HOMUNCULUS!

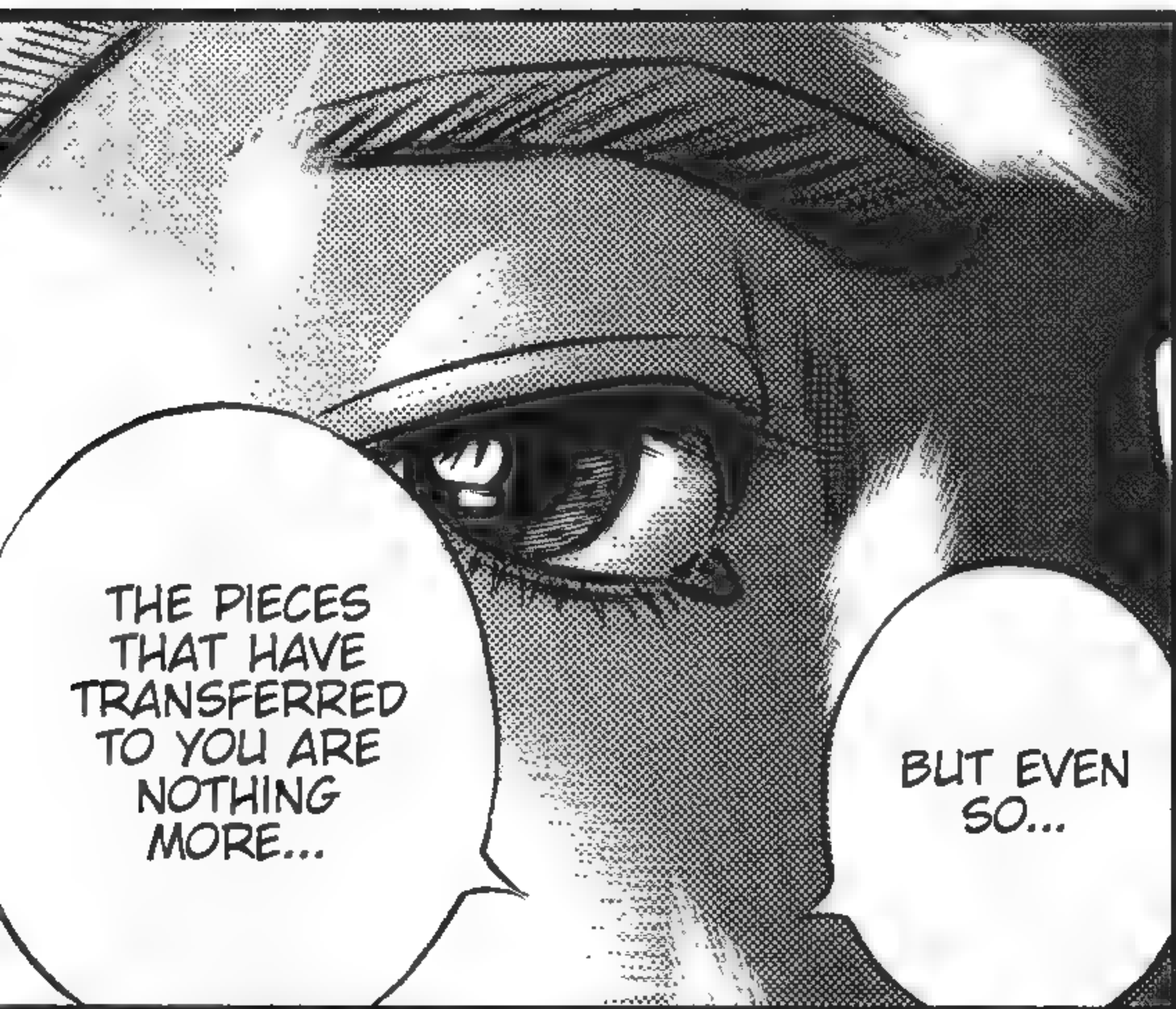
I NEED
SOMEONE
WHO CAN
SEE TO
LOOK AT
THEM
FOR ME!



YOU
REALLY
DON'T
GET IT,
DO YOU?

UGH.

?

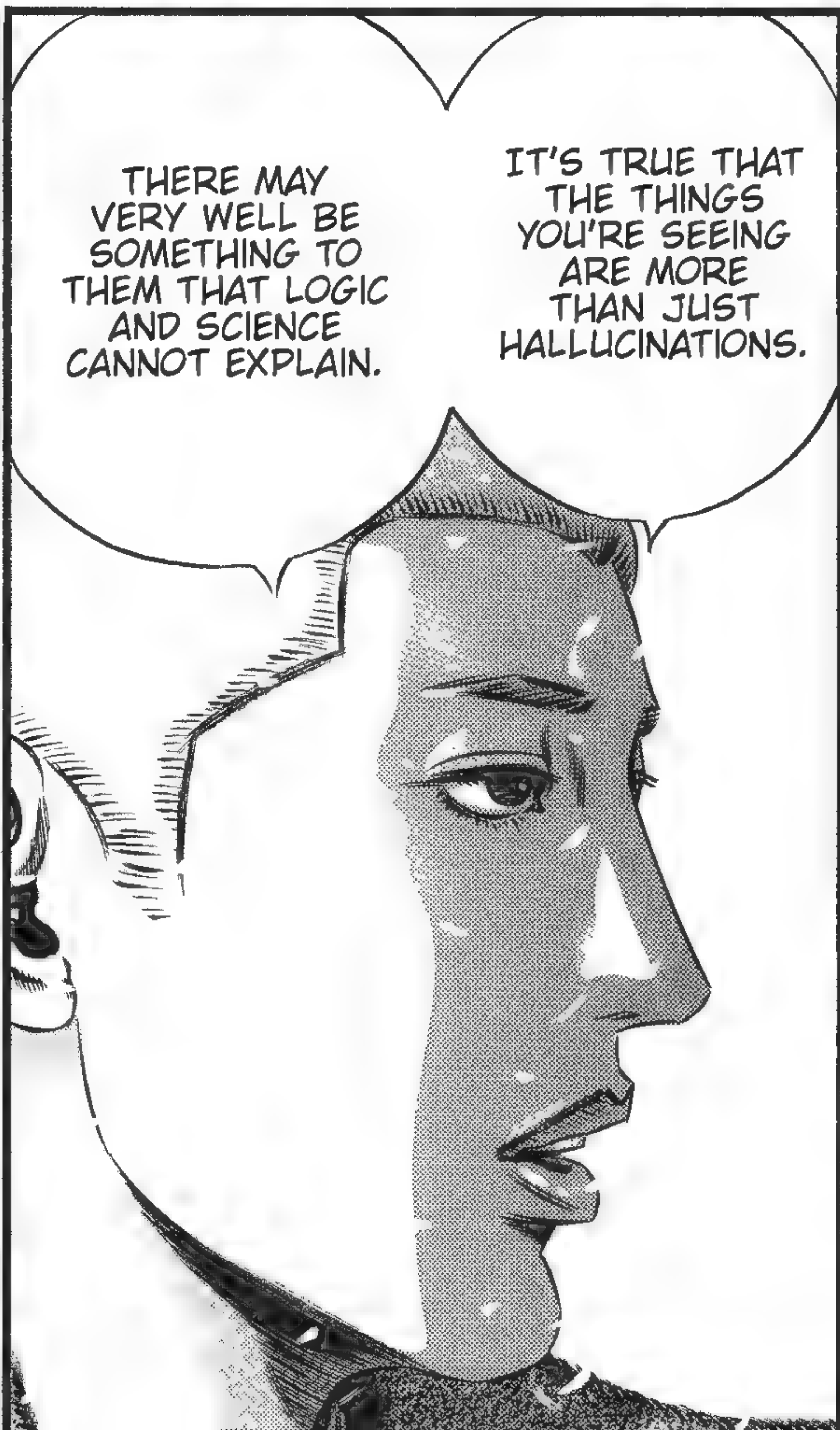


THE PIECES
THAT HAVE
TRANSFERRED
TO YOU ARE
NOTHING
MORE...

BUT EVEN
SO...



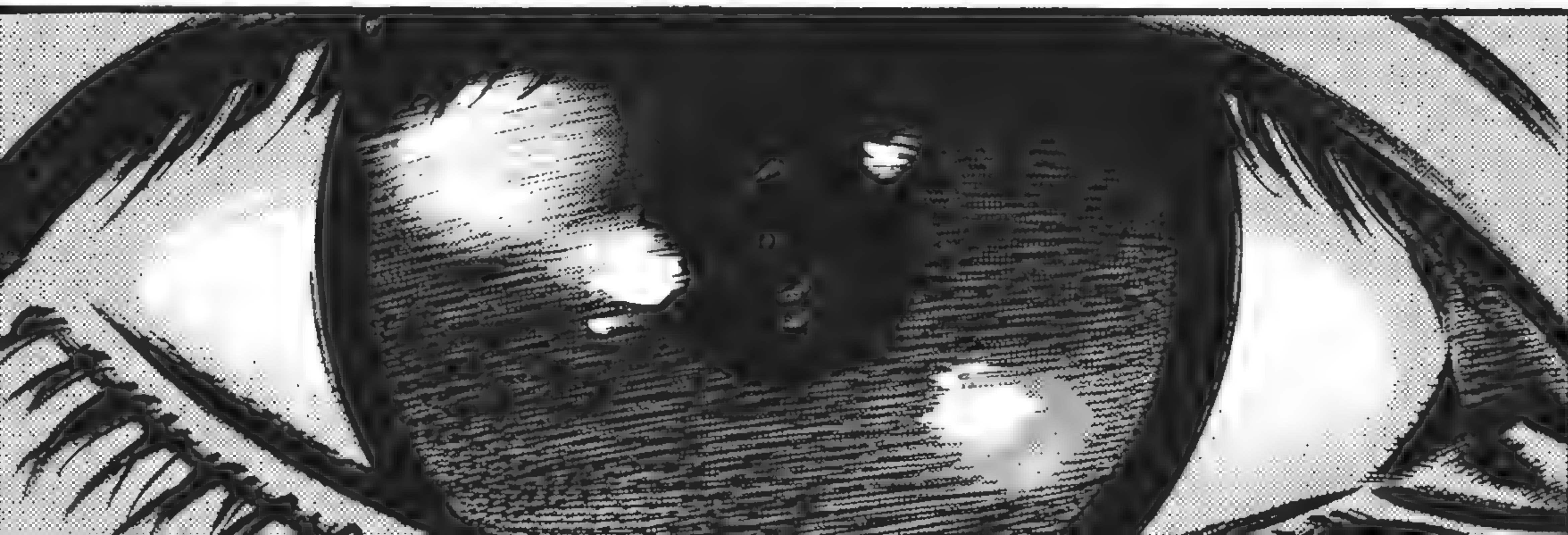
THAN
YOUR OWN
SELFISH
CRY TO BE
SEEN.



THERE MAY
VERY WELL BE
SOMETHING TO
THEM THAT LOGIC
AND SCIENCE
CANNOT EXPLAIN.

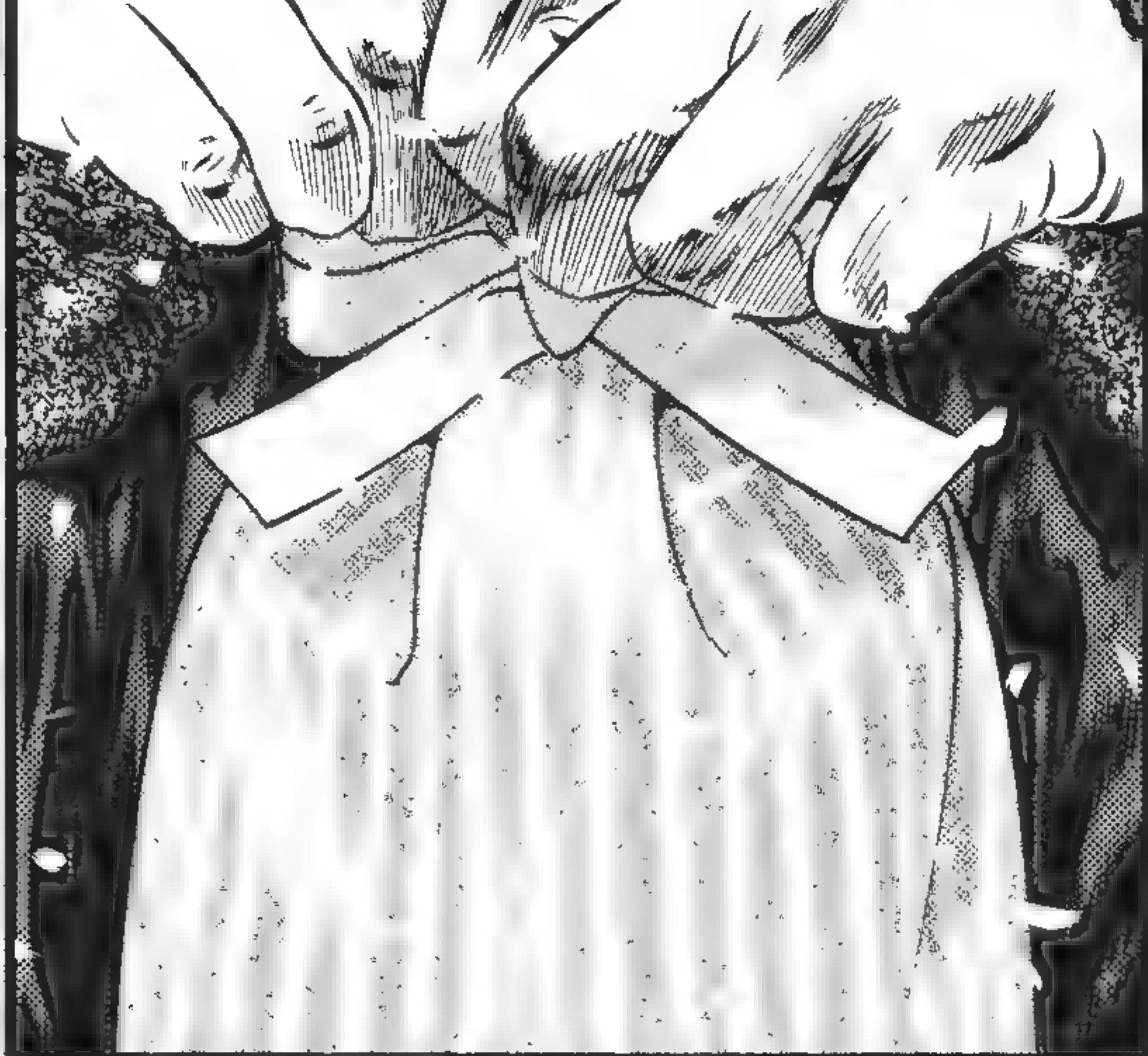
IT'S TRUE THAT
THE THINGS
YOU'RE SEEING
ARE MORE
THAN JUST
HALLUCINATIONS.







I'M NOT
SURE.

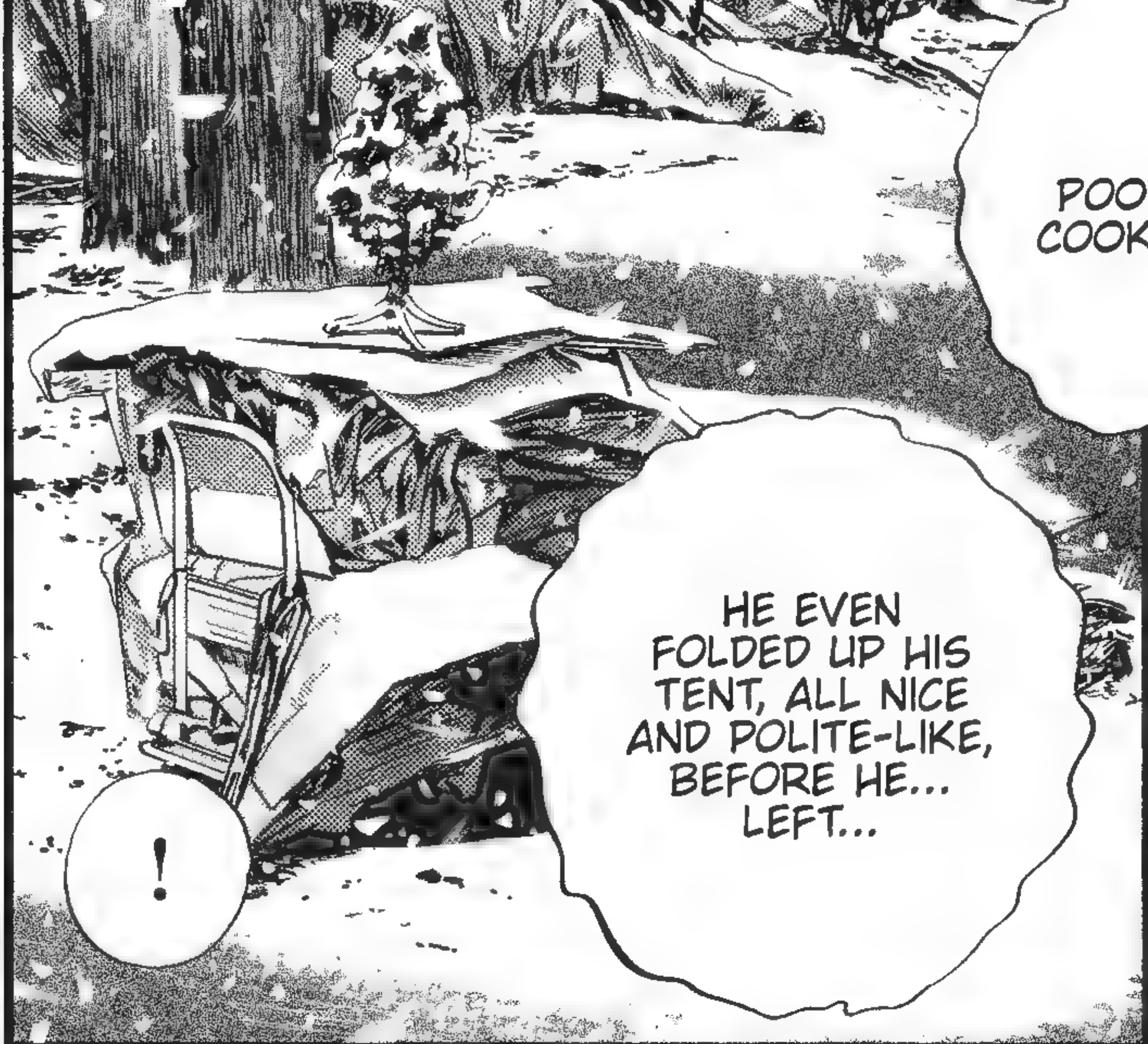












POOR
COOK...

HE EVEN
FOLDED UP HIS
TENT, ALL NICE
AND POLITE-LIKE,
BEFORE HE...
LEFT...



NO...



ALL IT
WOULD'VE
TAKEN WAS
A LITTLE
COURAGE...

YOU
HAD A
PLACE
TO GO!

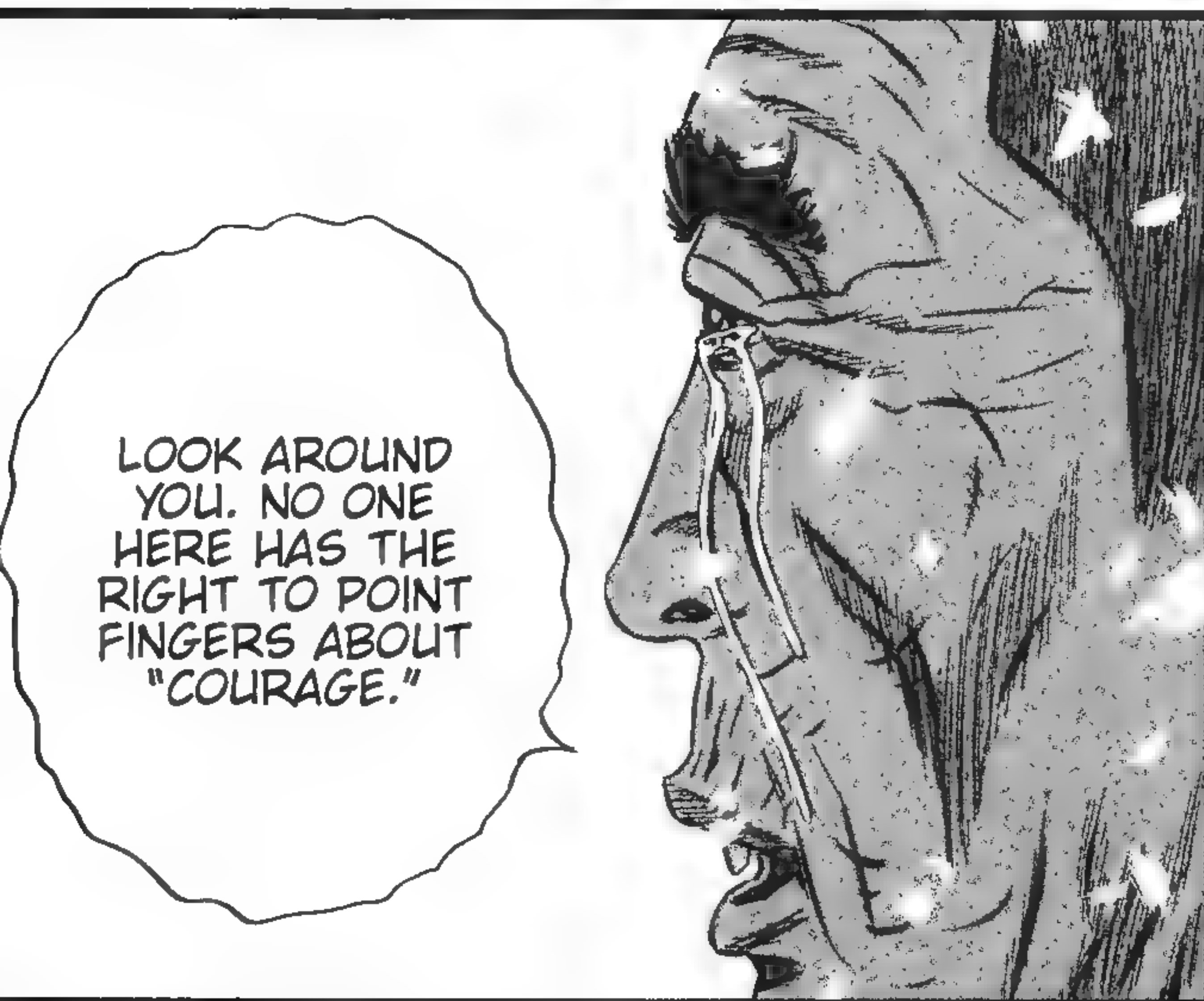


AN' IN
THE END,
HE CHOSE...
THIS.

HE MUSTA
GONE BACK
AN' FORTH
ON WHETHER
TO GO TO HIS
DAUGHTER...



JUST THE
TINIEST BIT
OF COURAGE,
AND YOU...



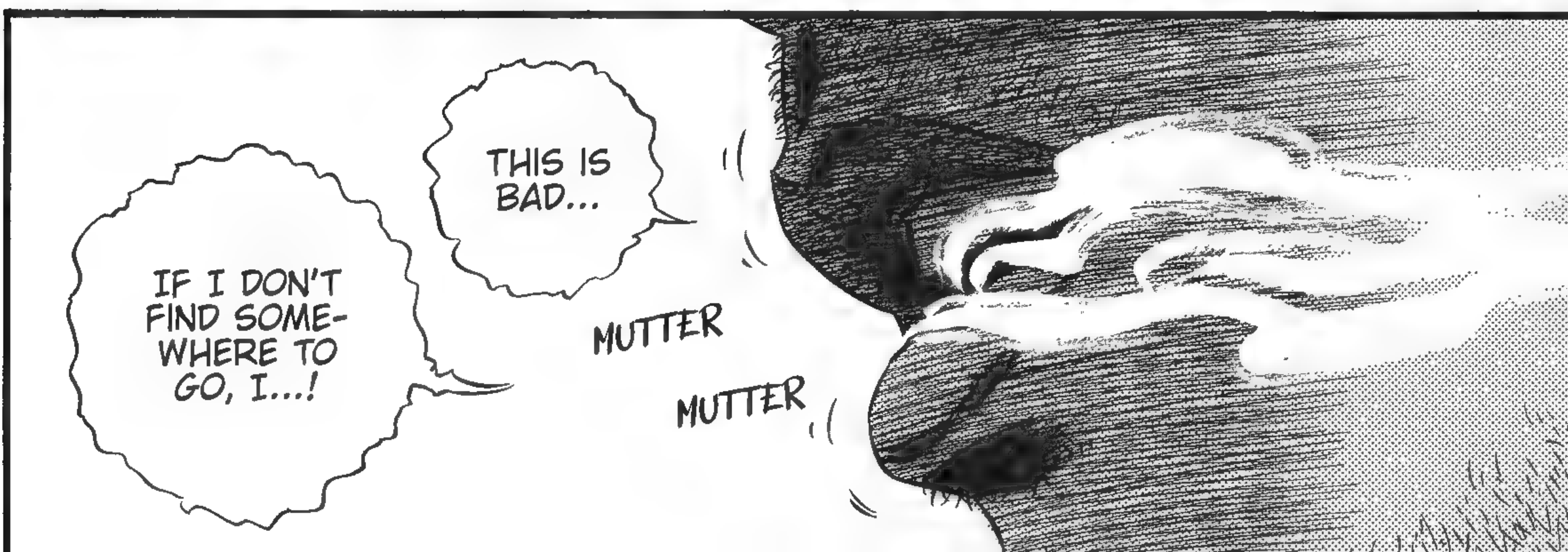
LOOK AROUND
YOU. NO ONE
HERE HAS THE
RIGHT TO POINT
FINGERS ABOUT
"COURAGE."



!

CAR
GUY...

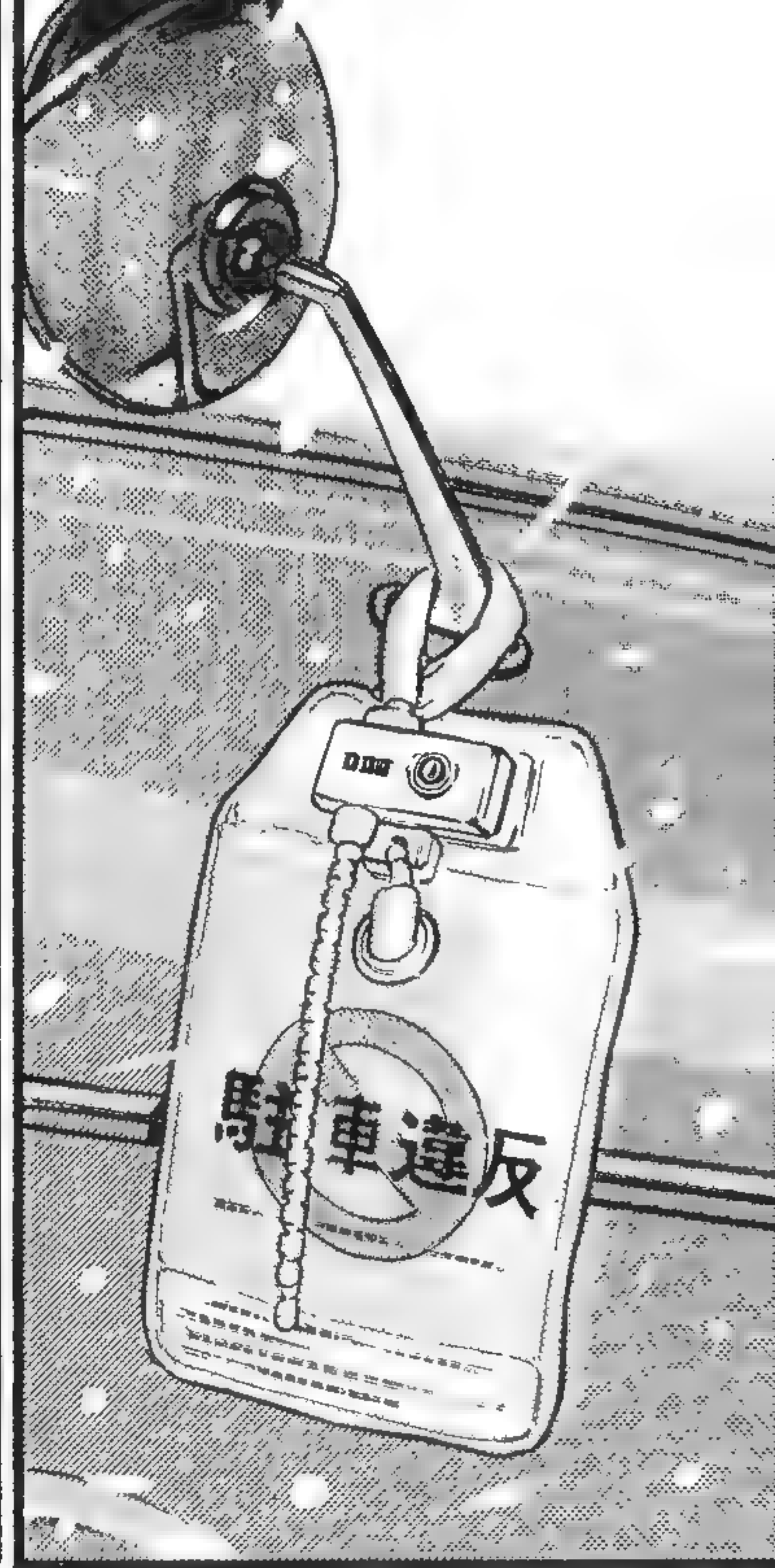






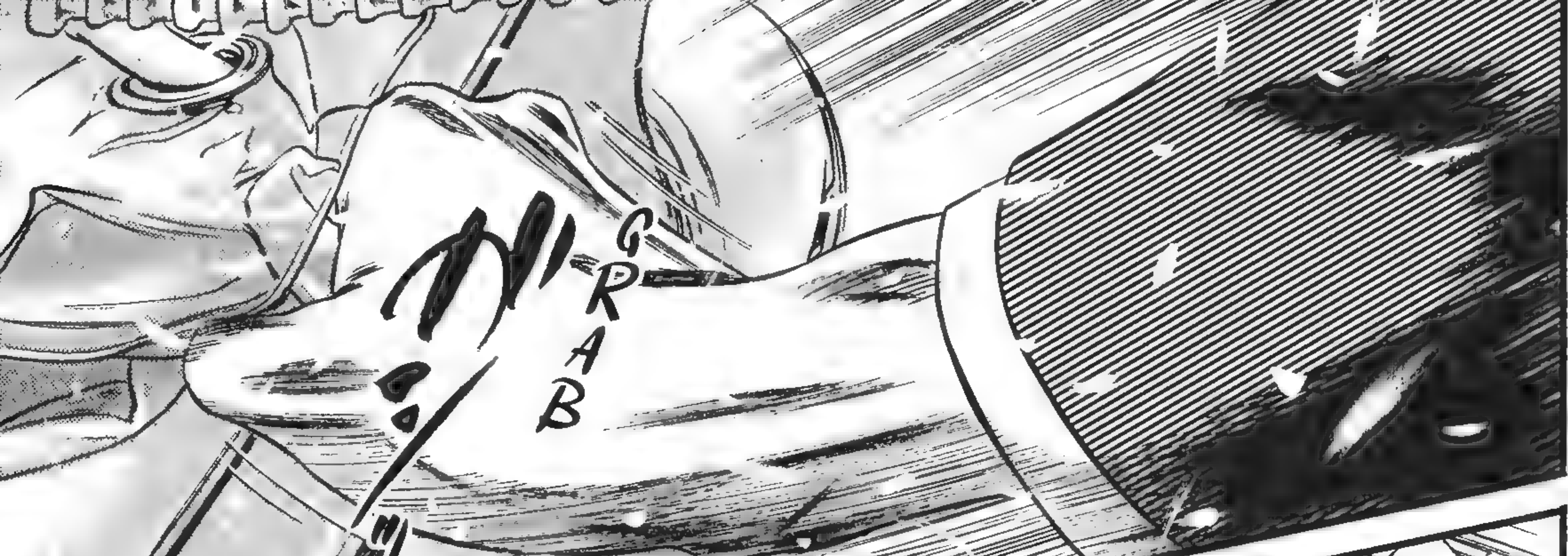
**I HAVE
TO FIND
A PLACE
SOME-
WHERE!**





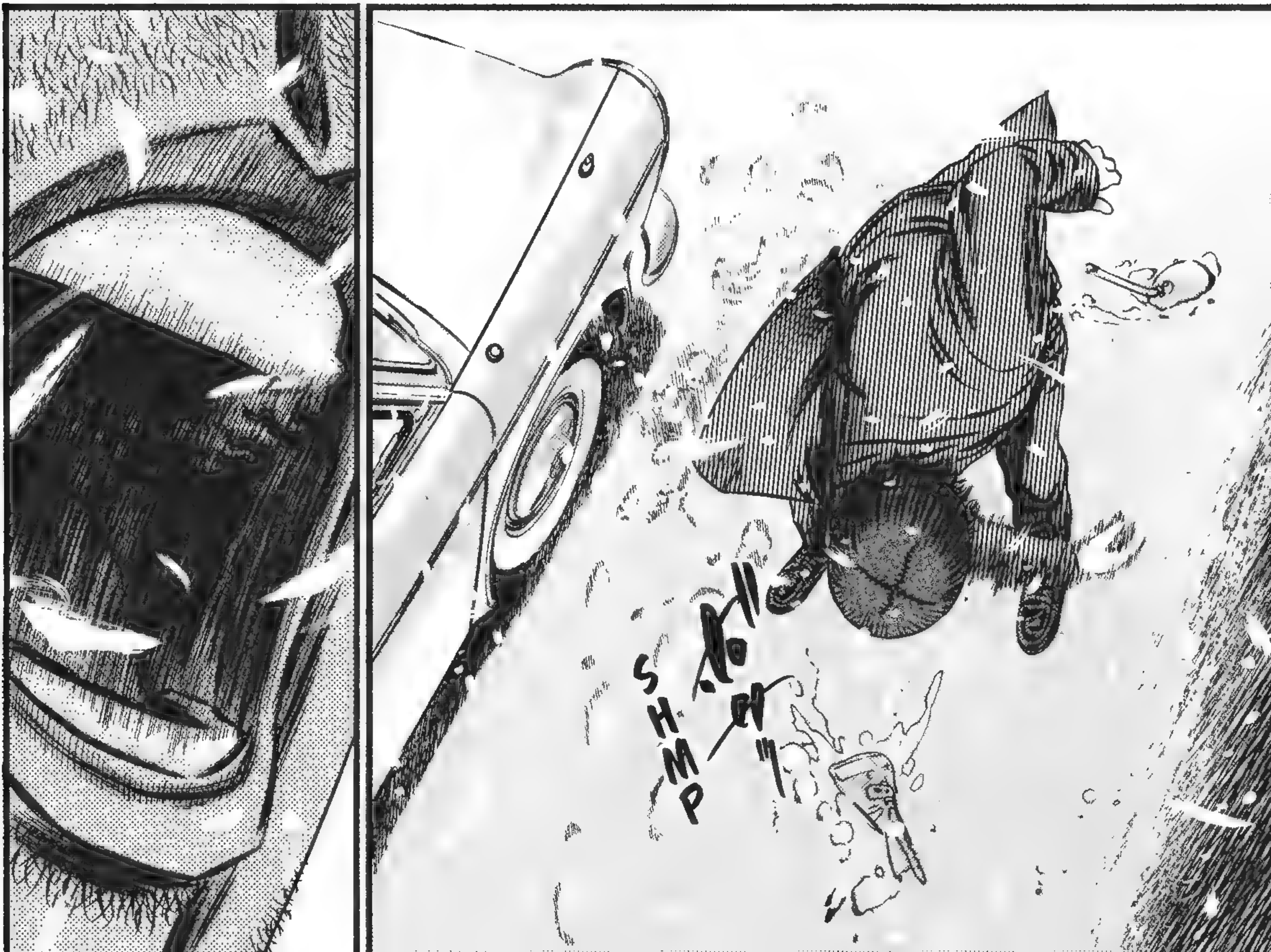
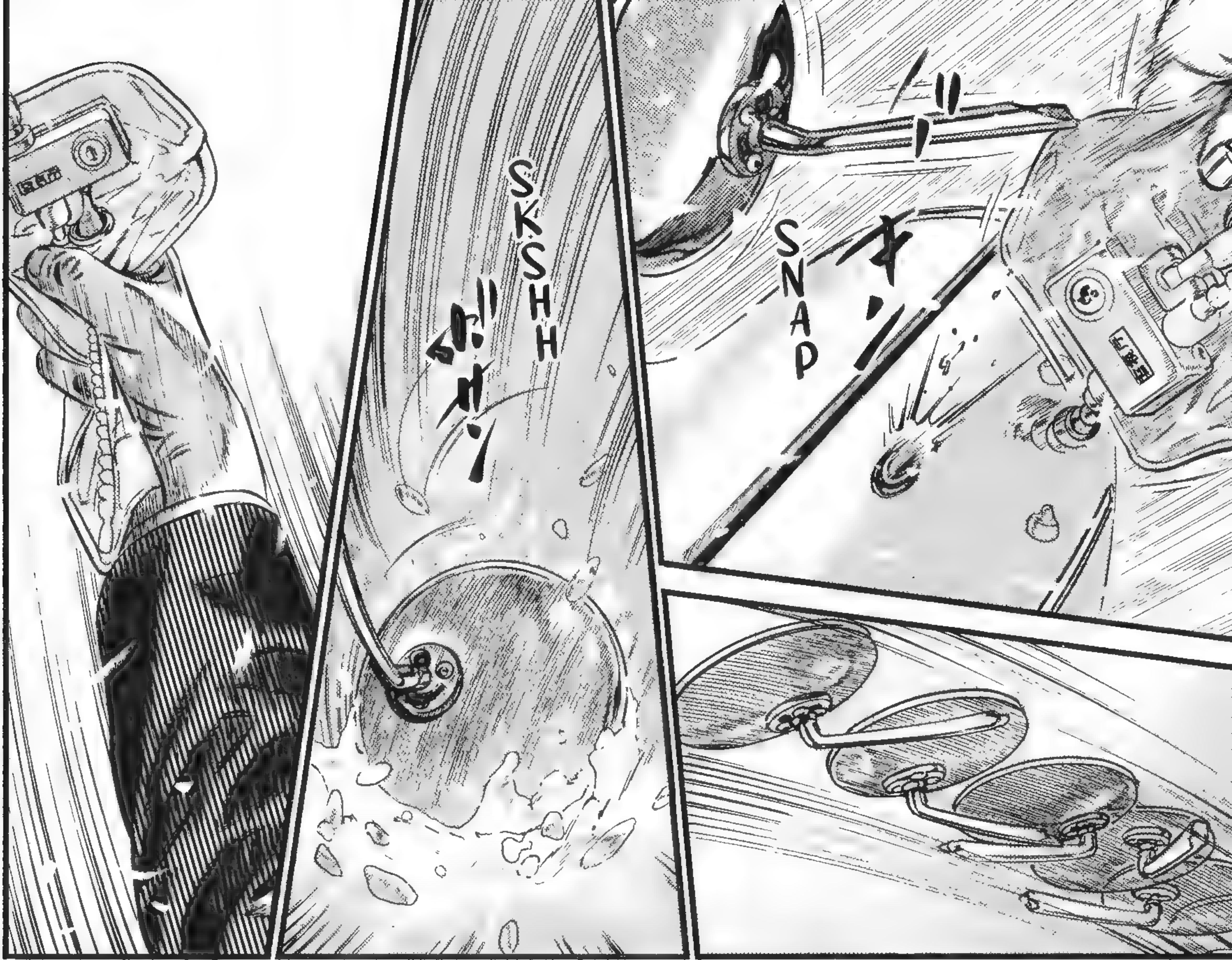
Tag: Parking Violation





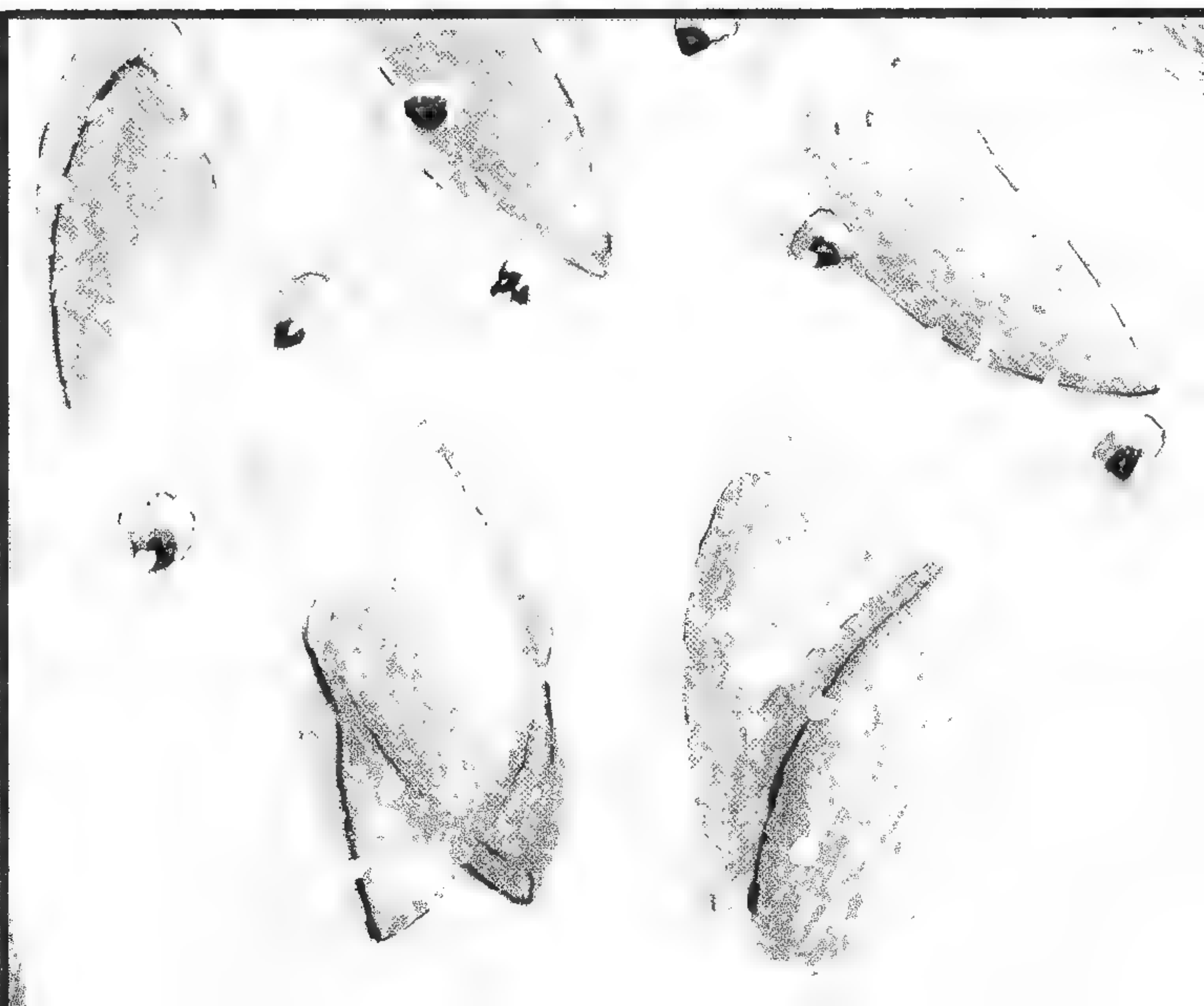
この標章を
損壊します。
Tag: Damaging or removing this tag is strictly prohibited.

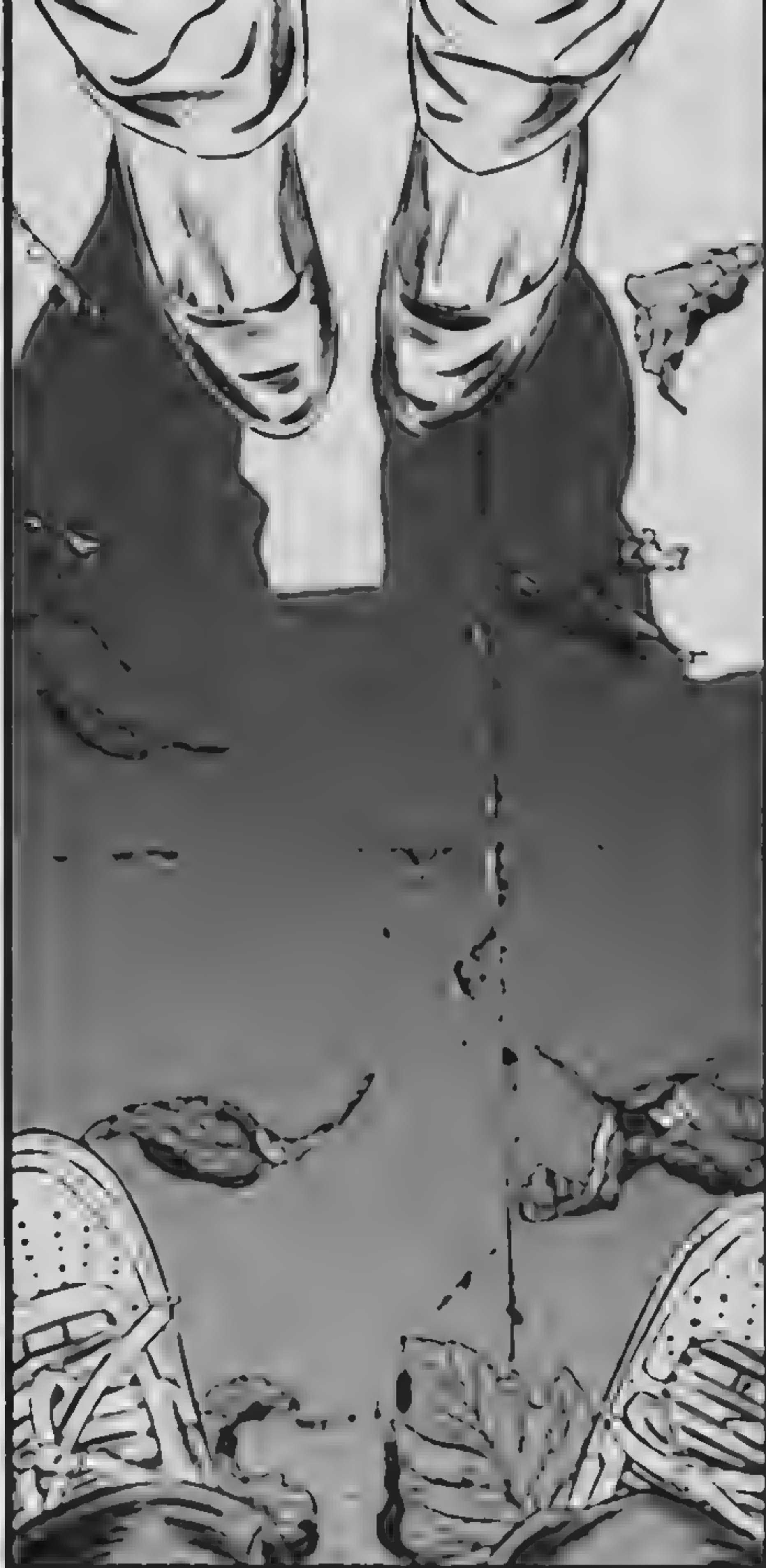






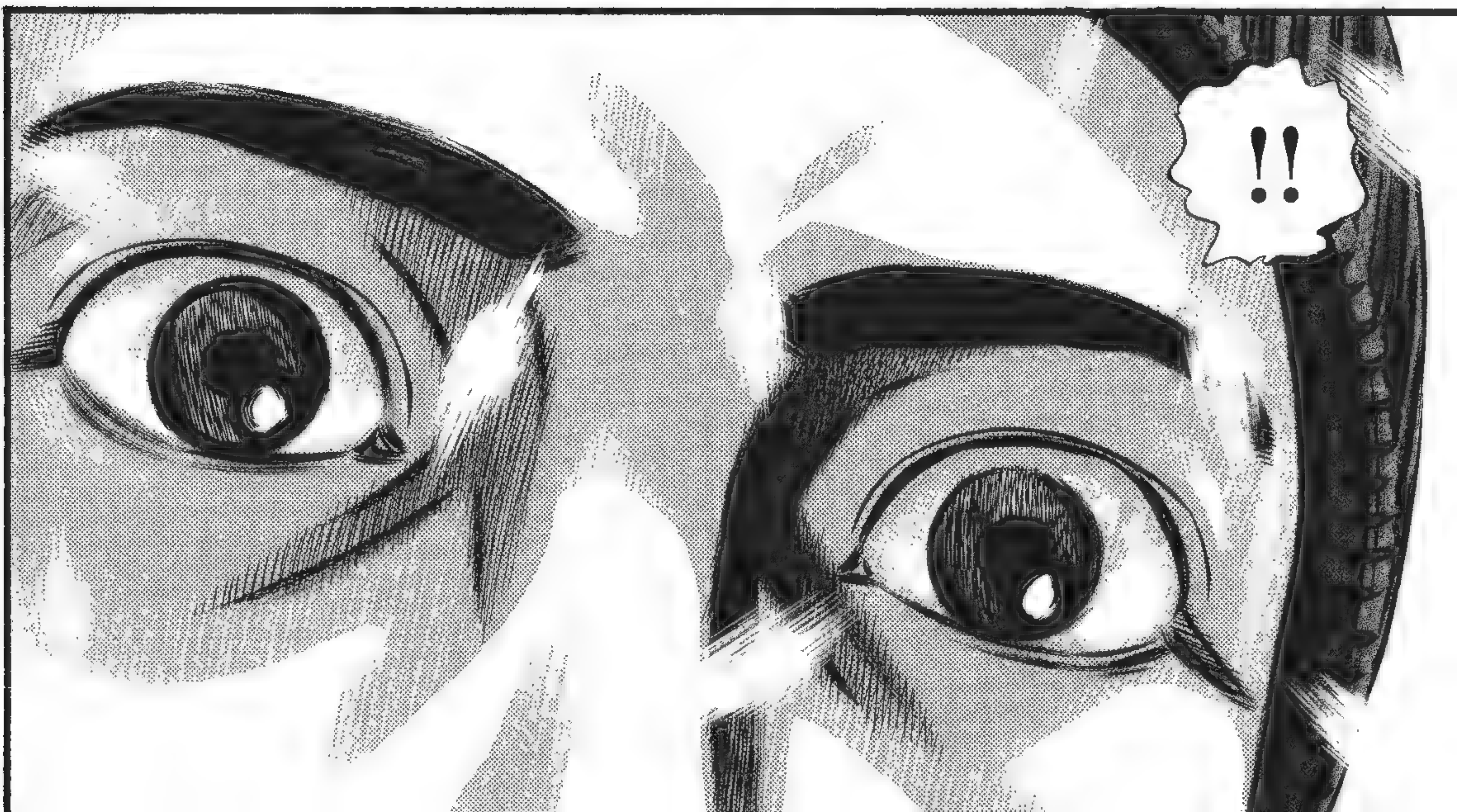
WHERE
THE HELL
DO YOU
WANT ME
TO GO?!!





NANAKO
...

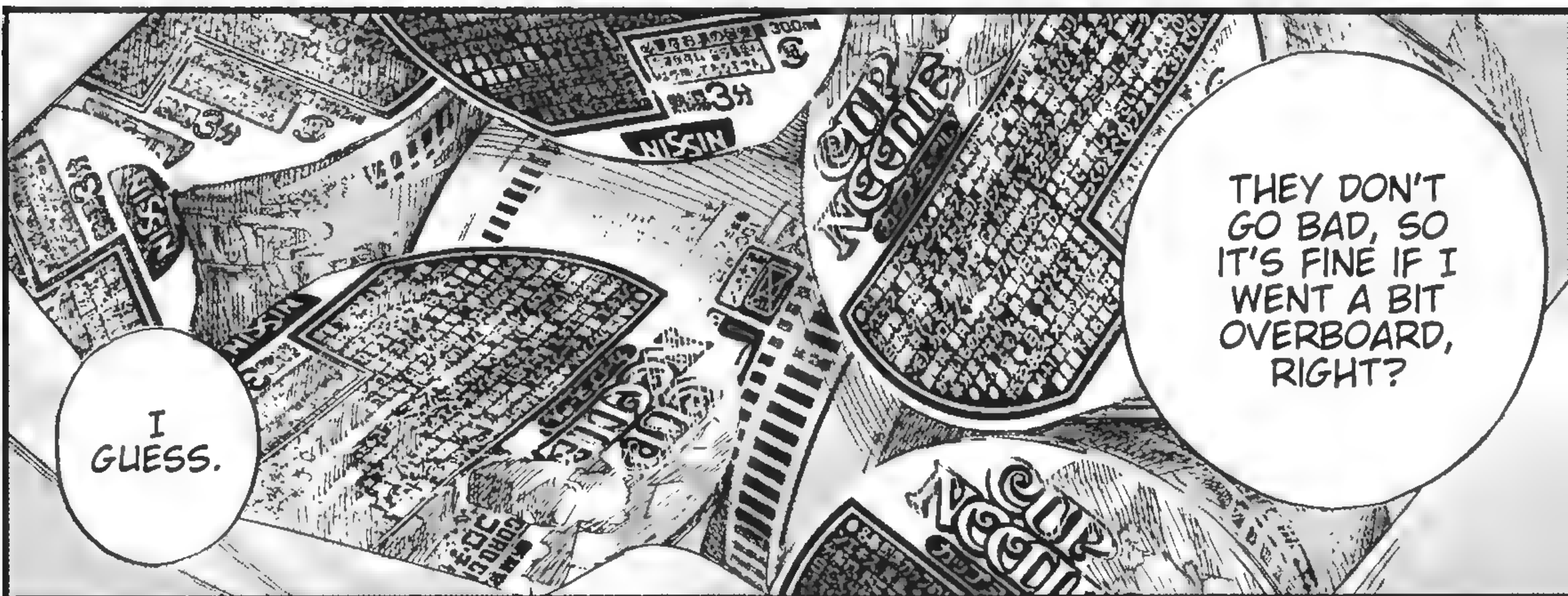
!?

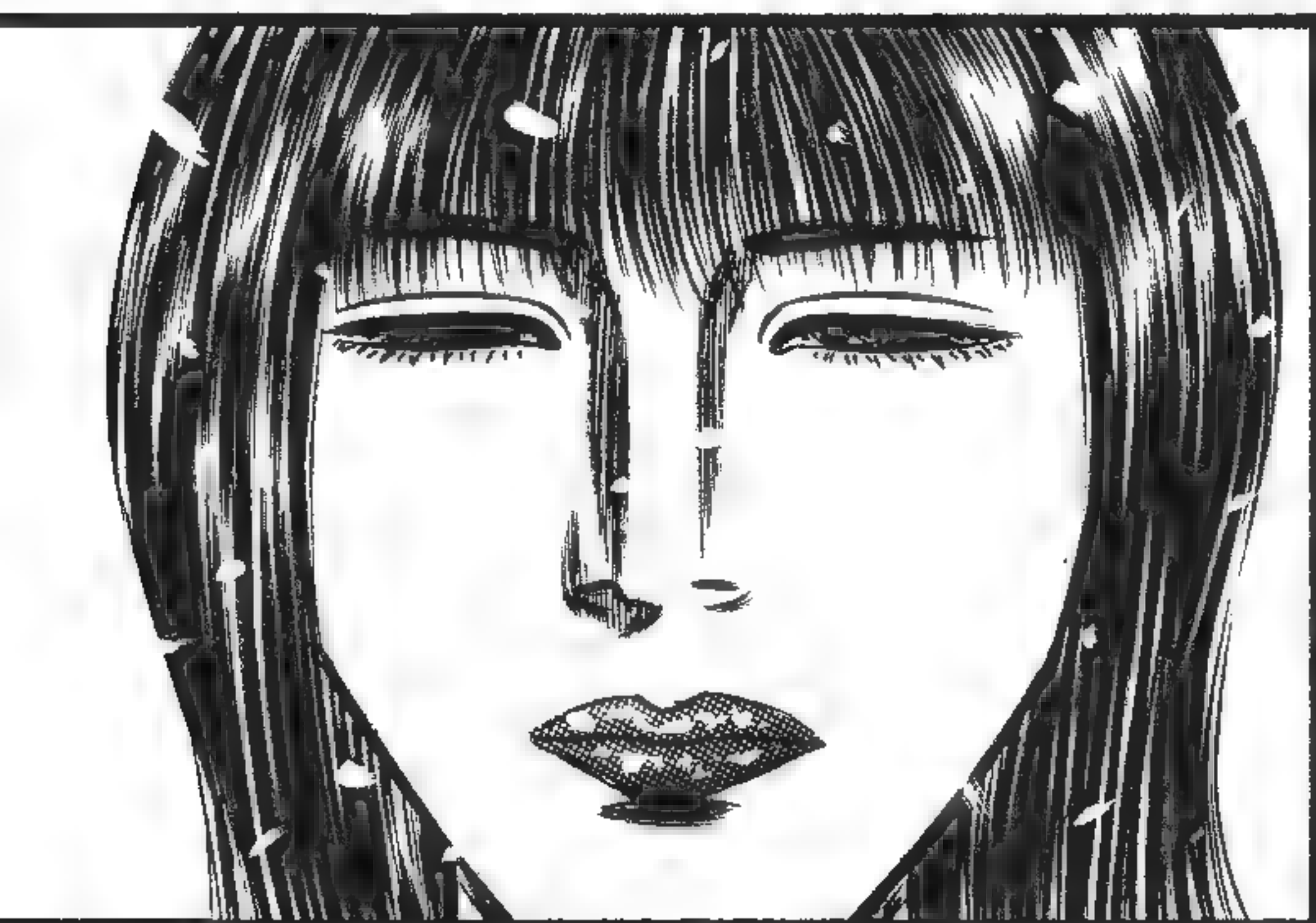
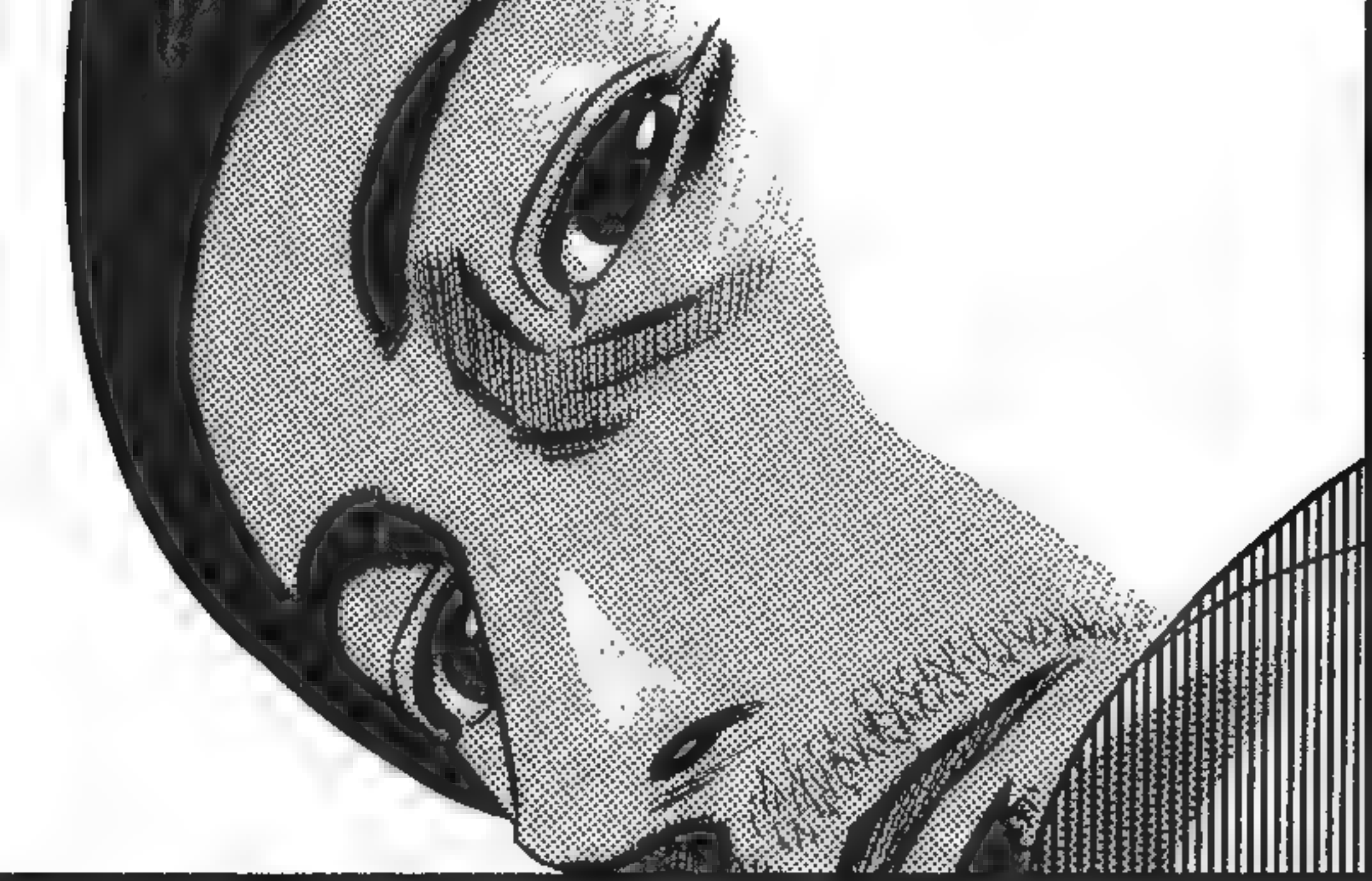


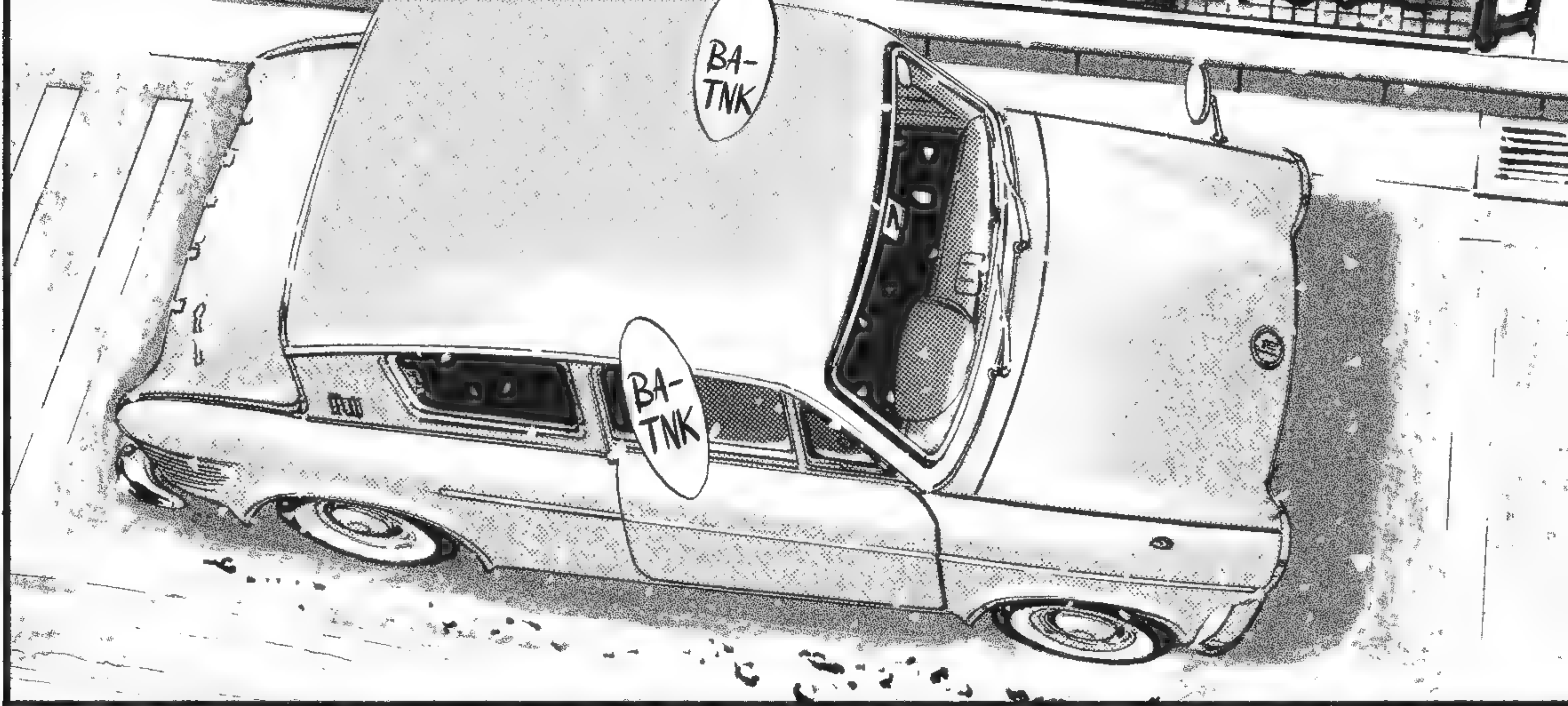




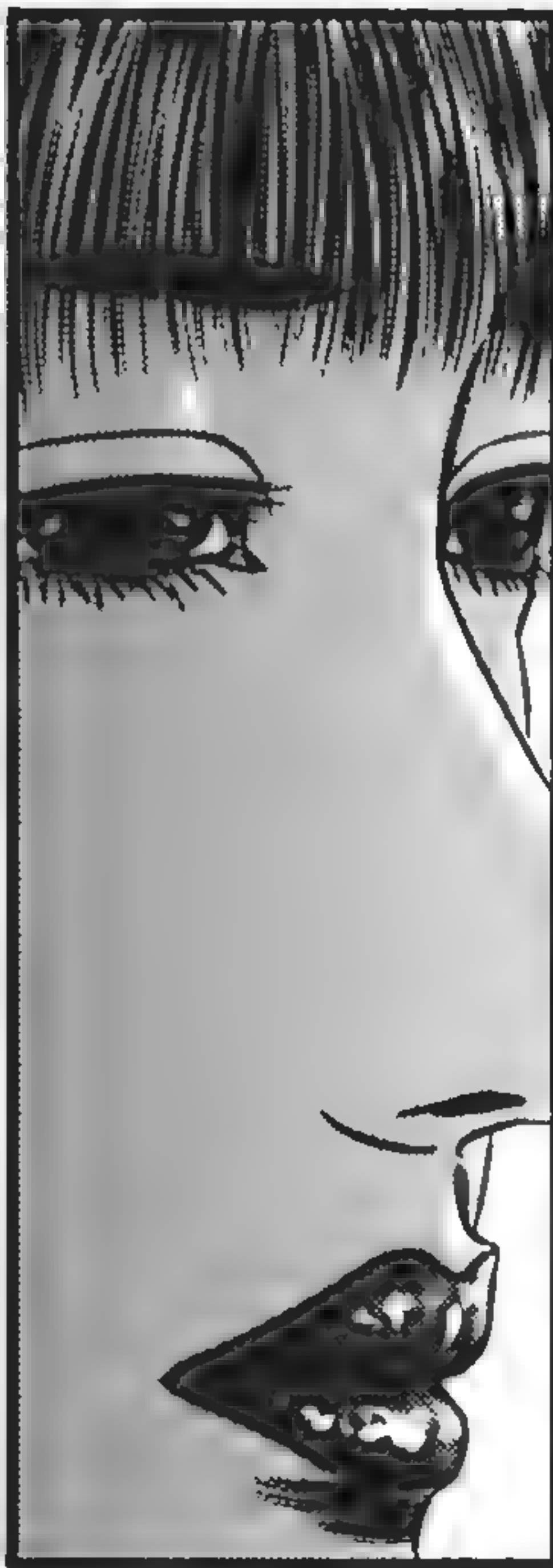
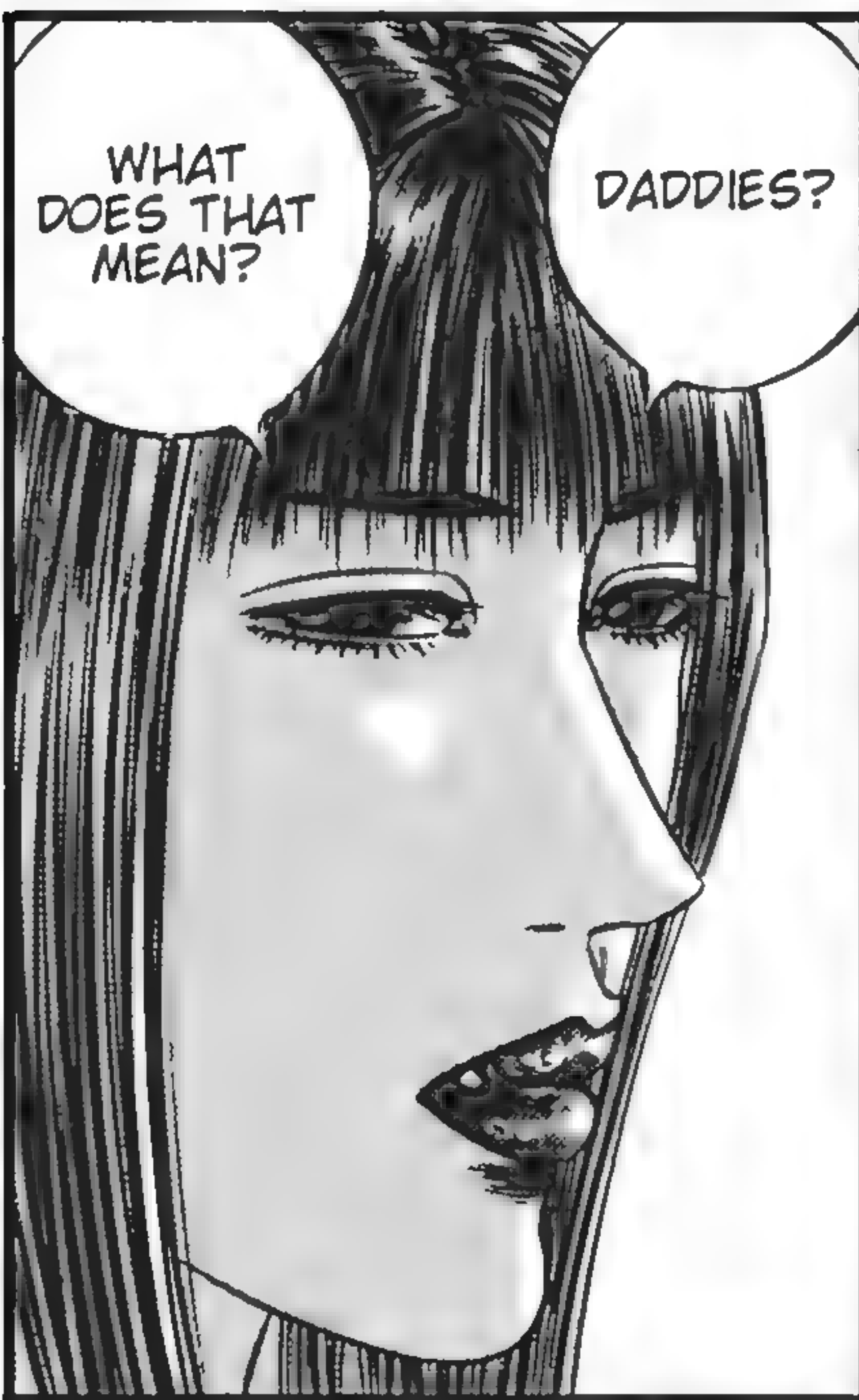
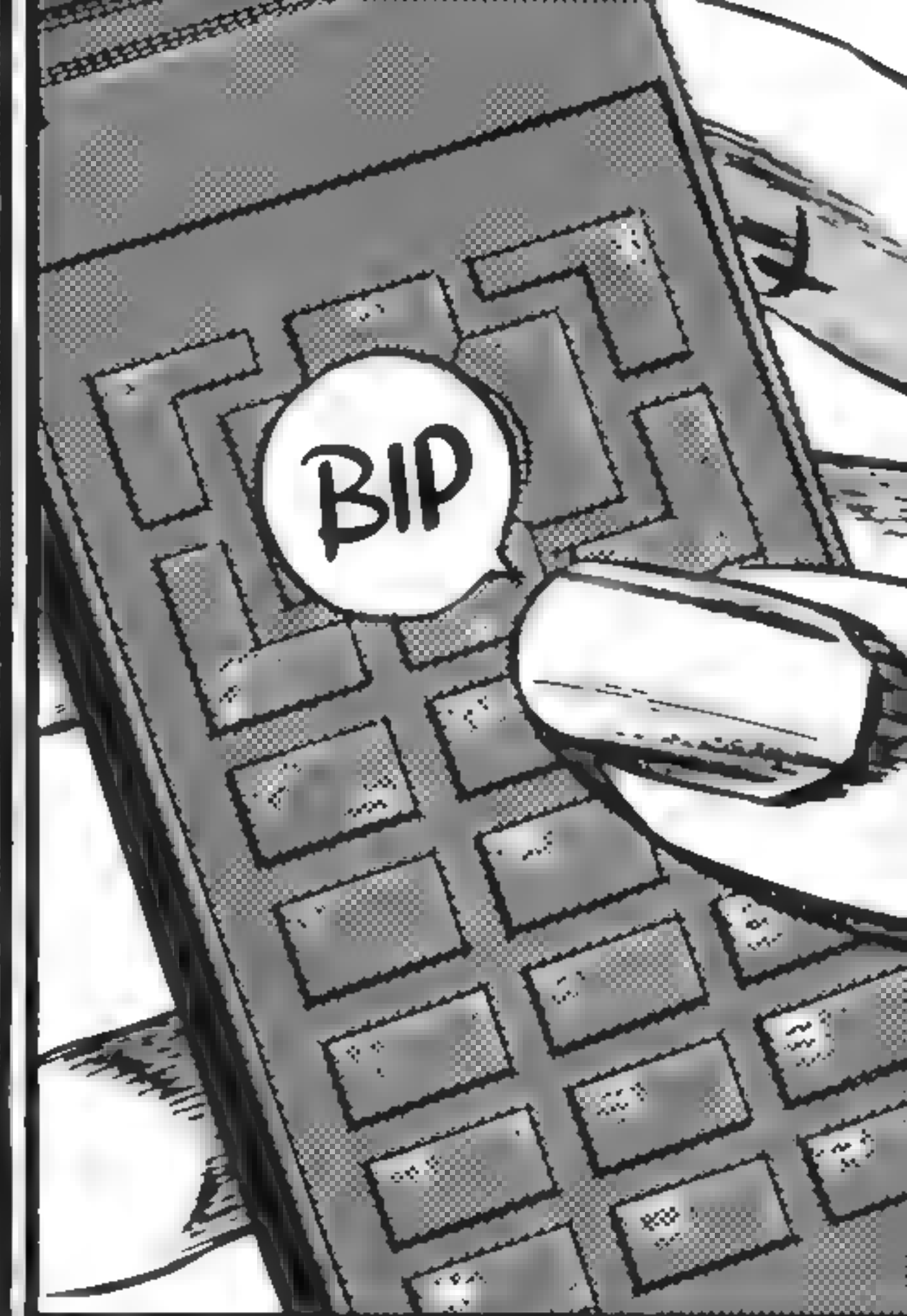






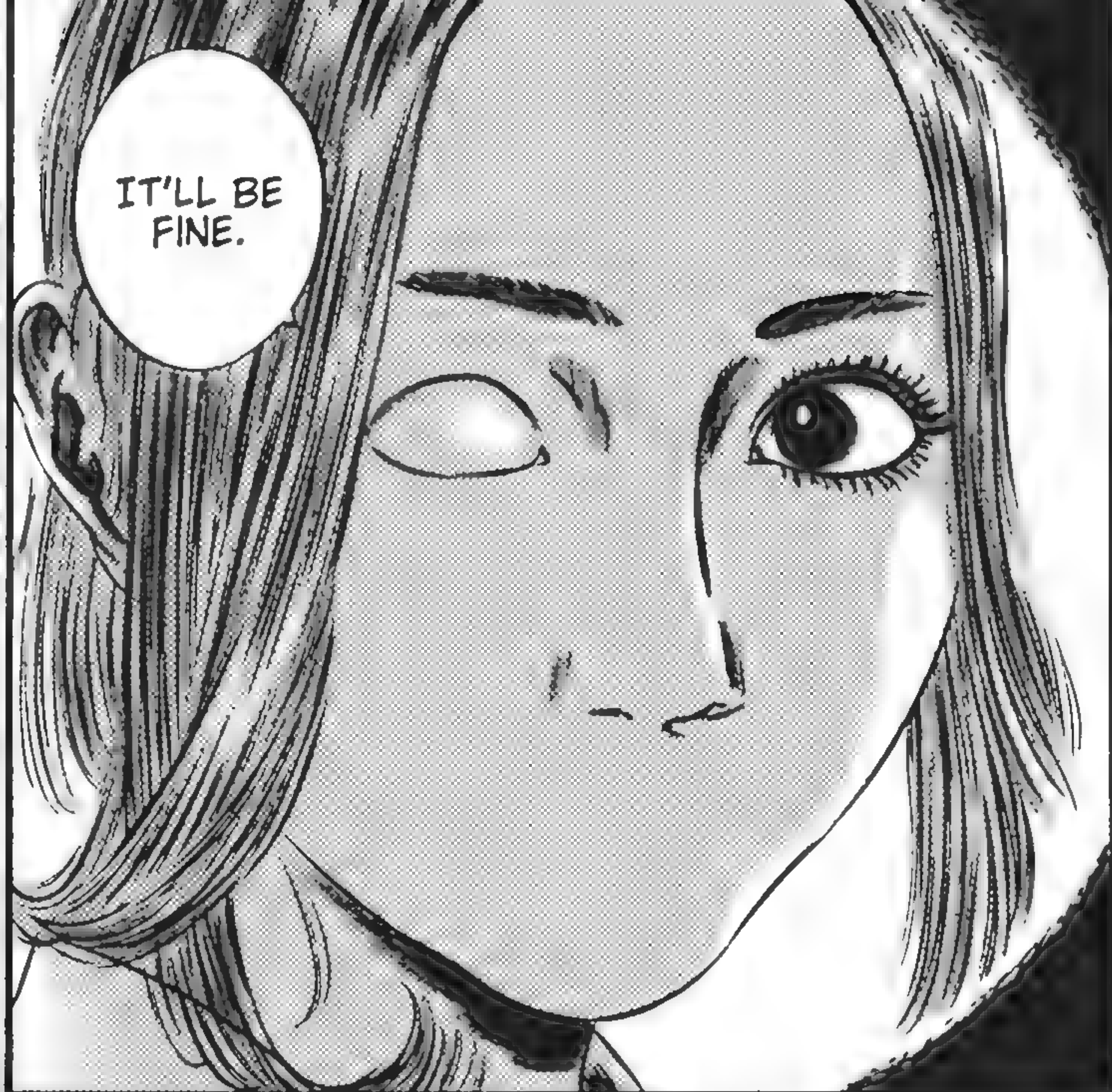




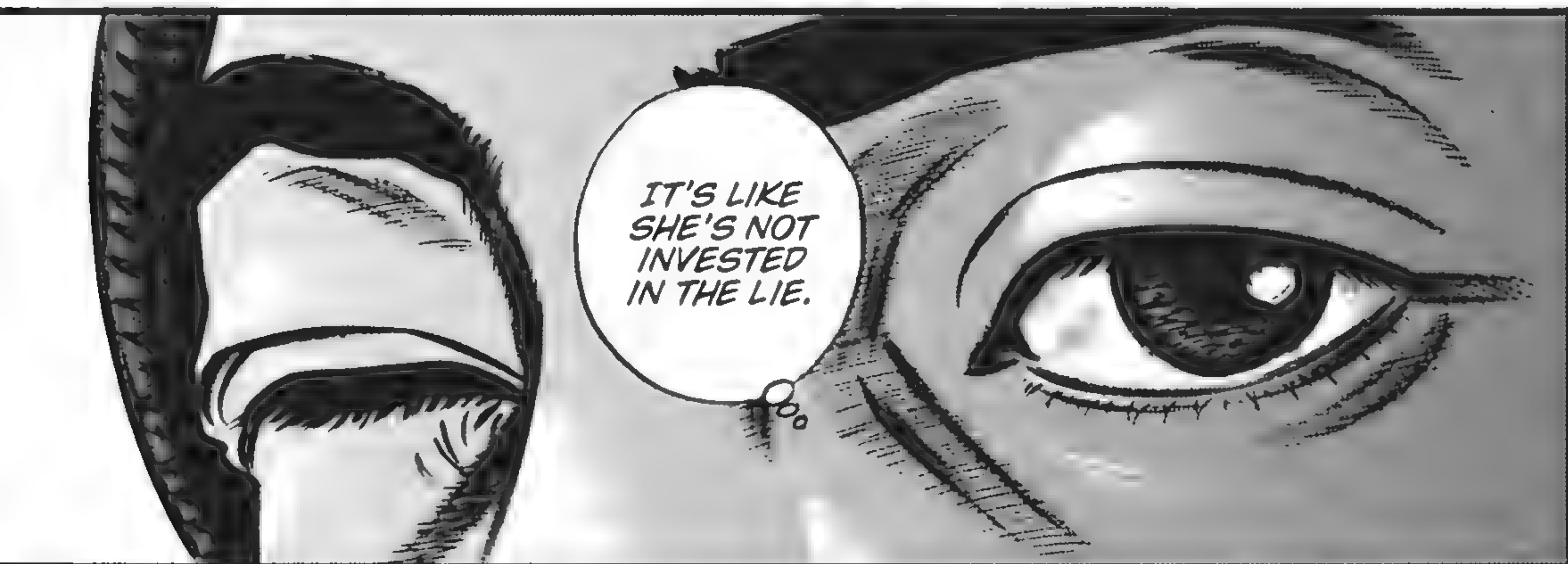




SHE CAN'T
SEEM TO
COMMIT TO
THE ROLE.



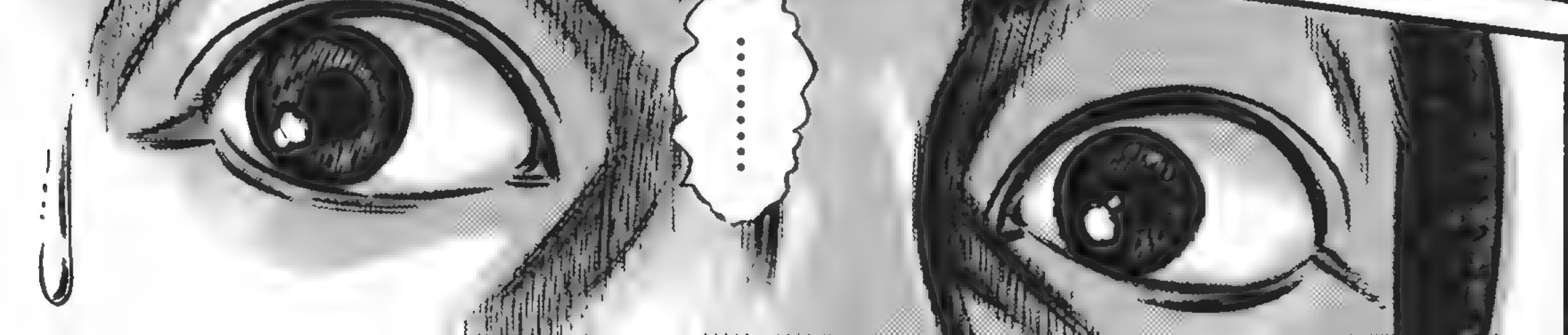
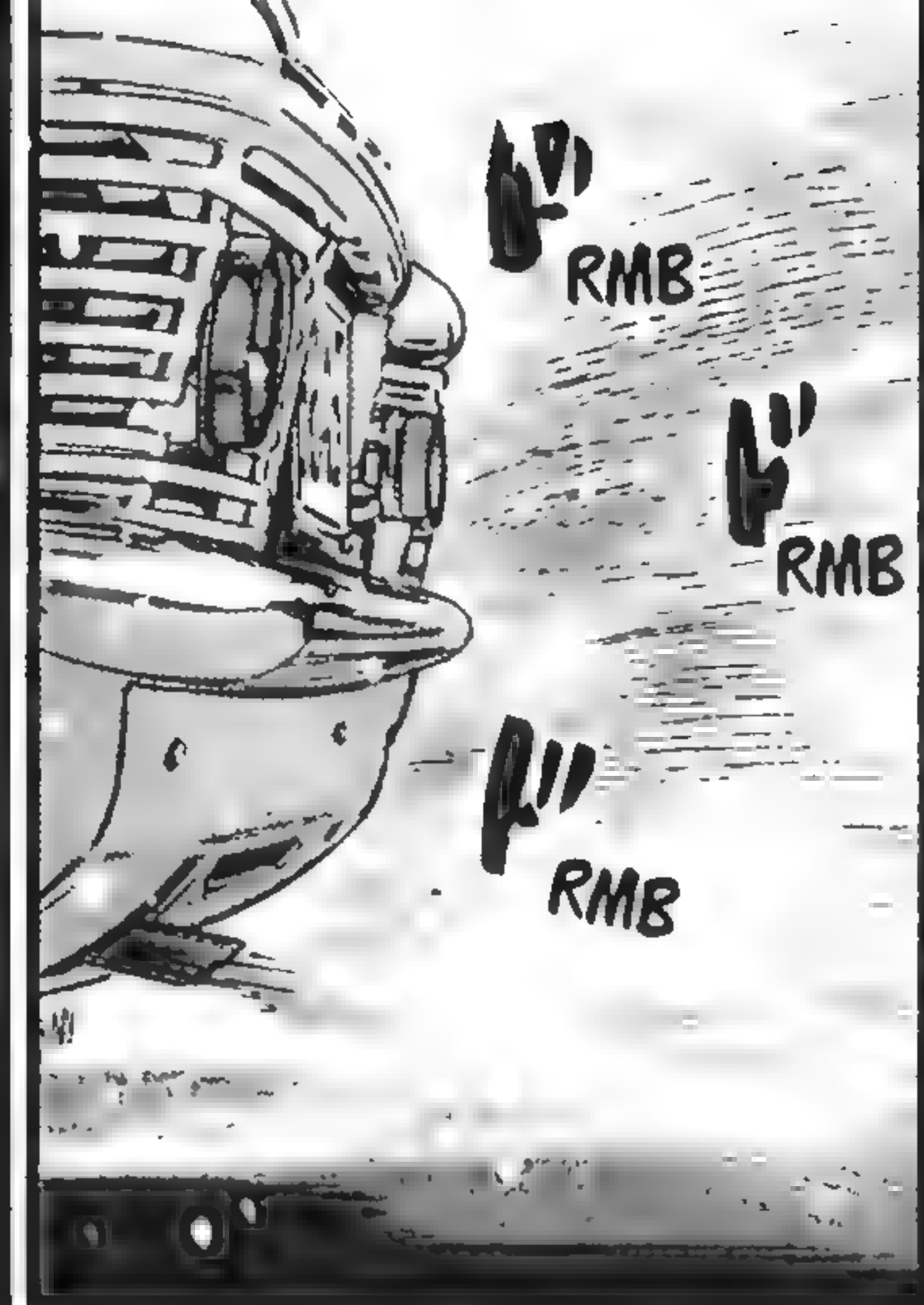
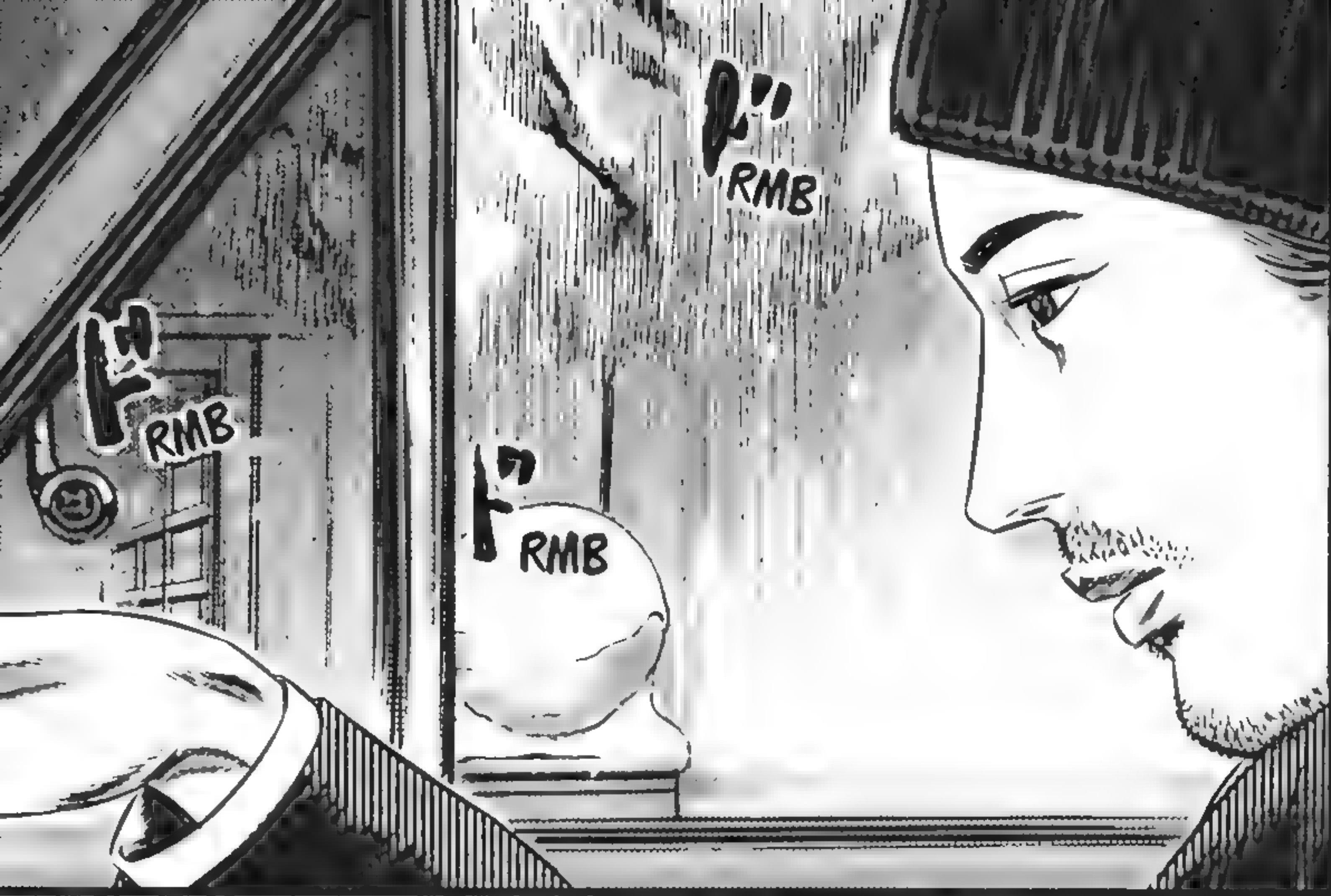
IT'LL BE
FINE.



IT'S LIKE
SHE'S NOT
INVESTED
IN THE LIE.

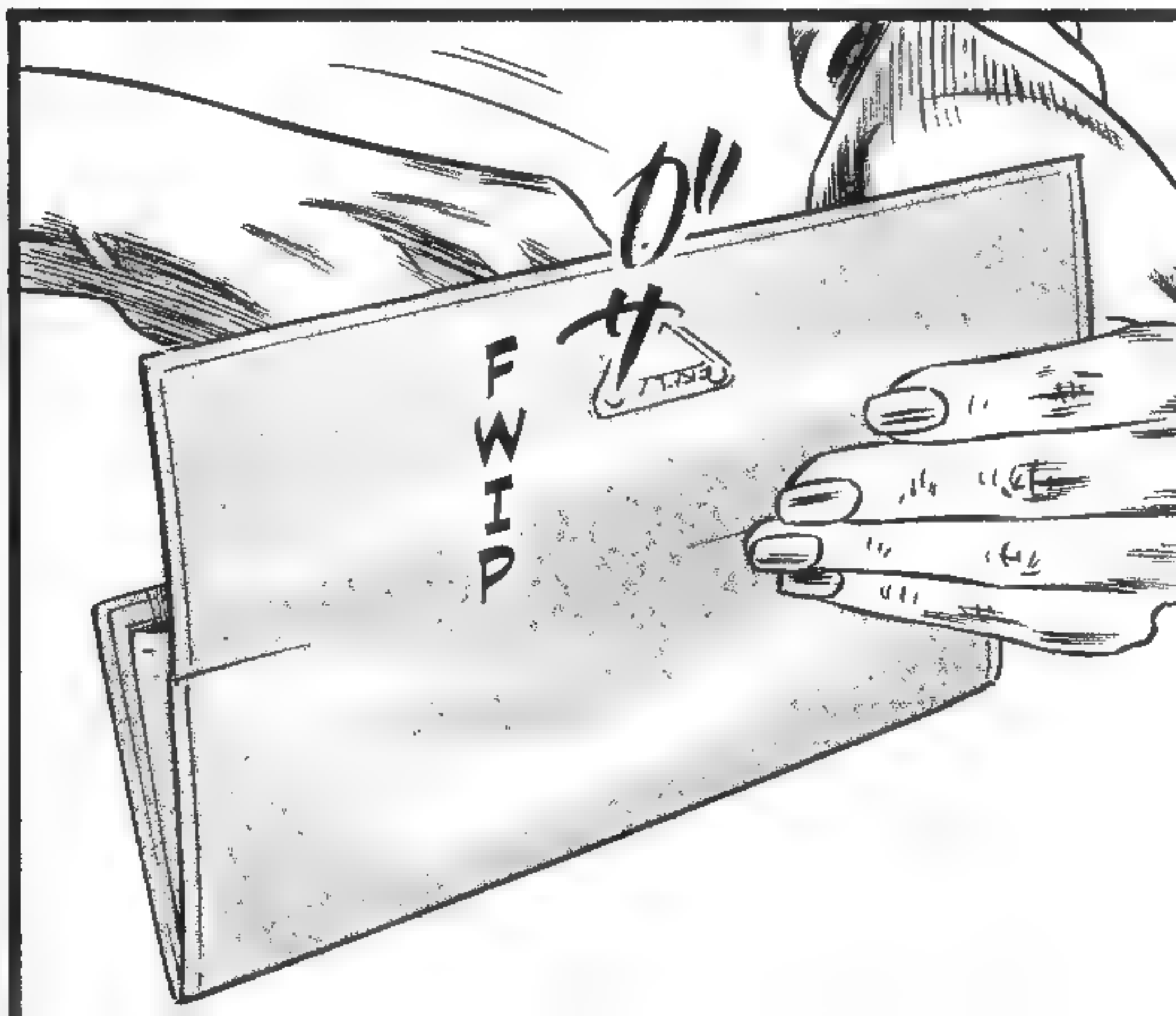
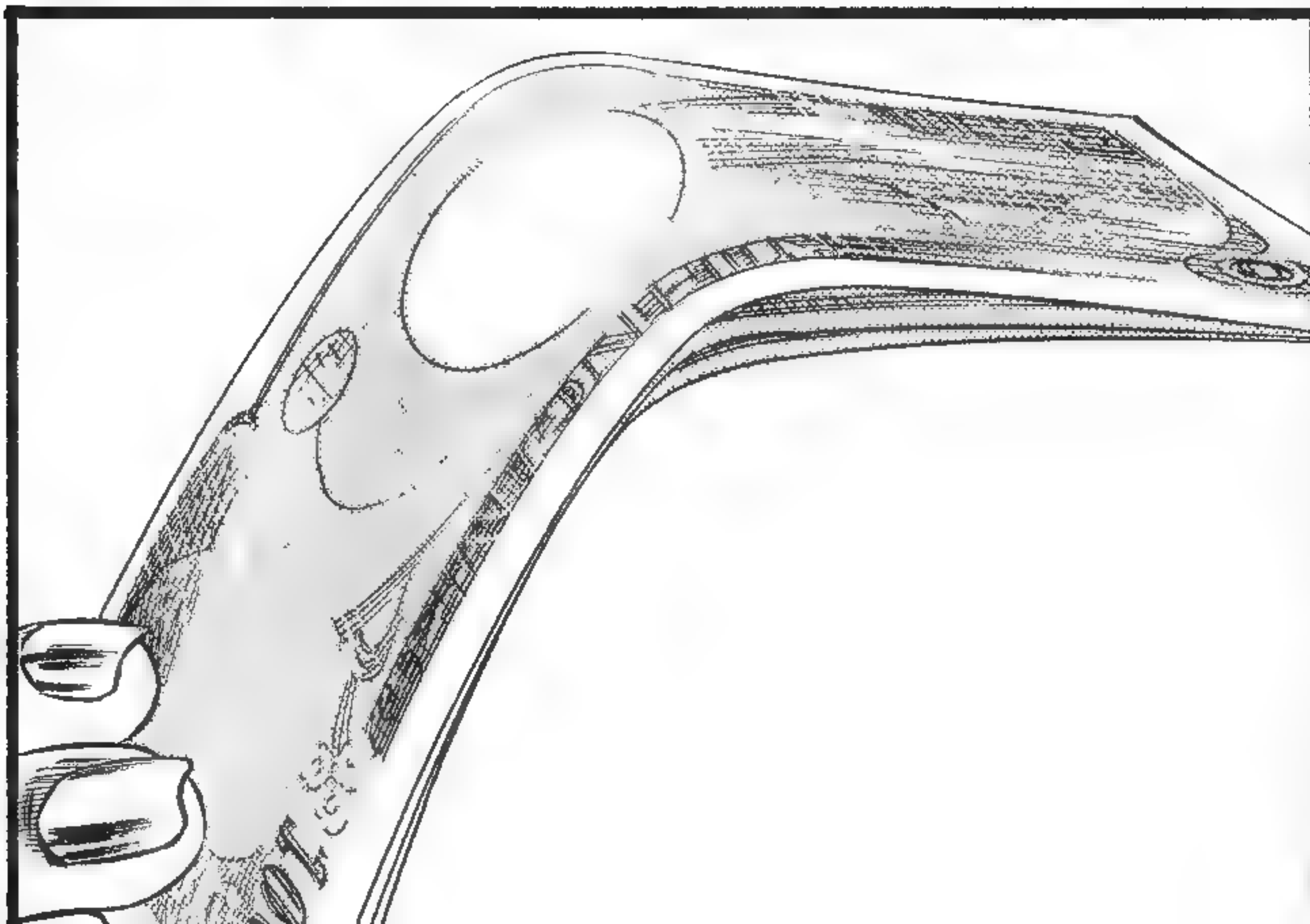
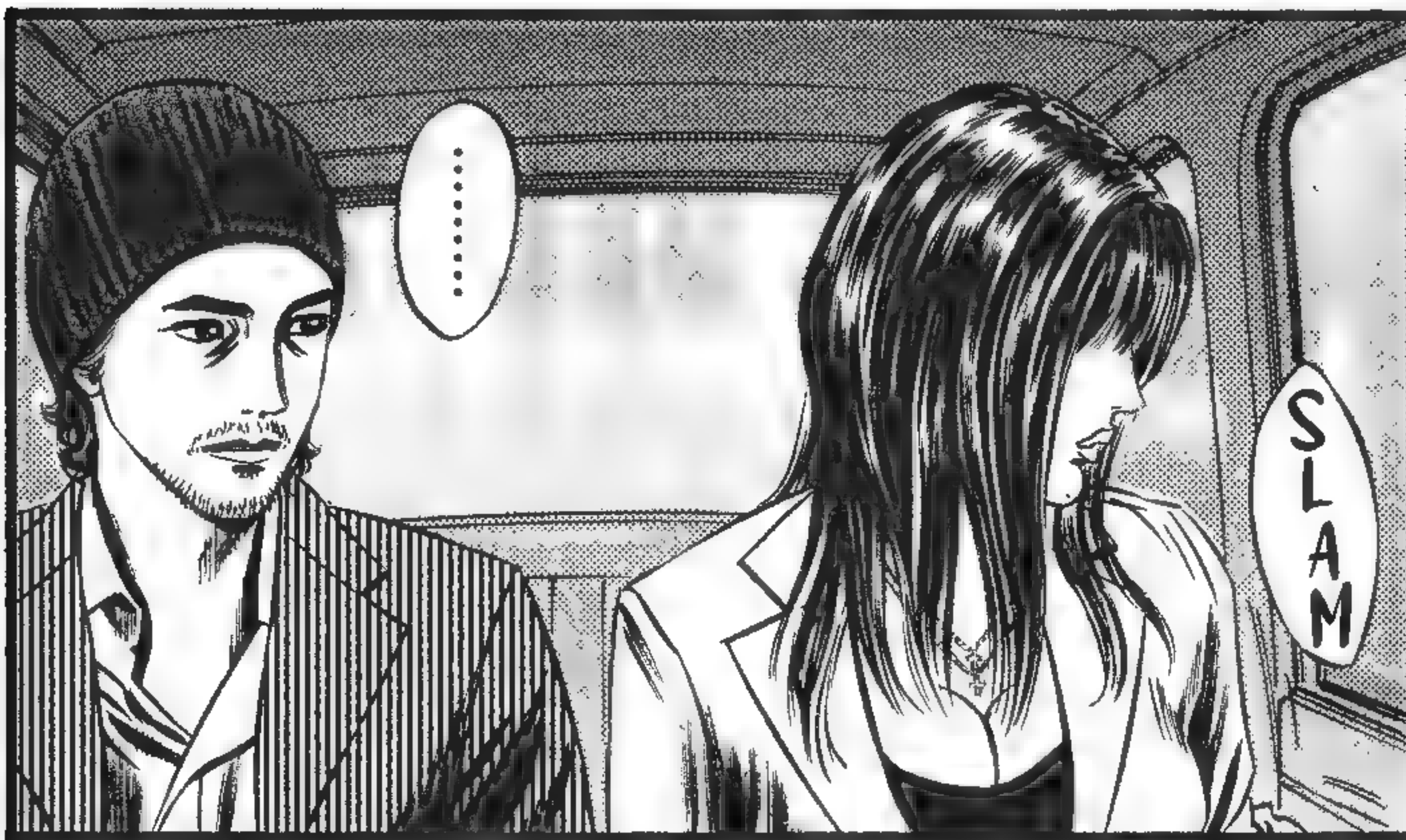




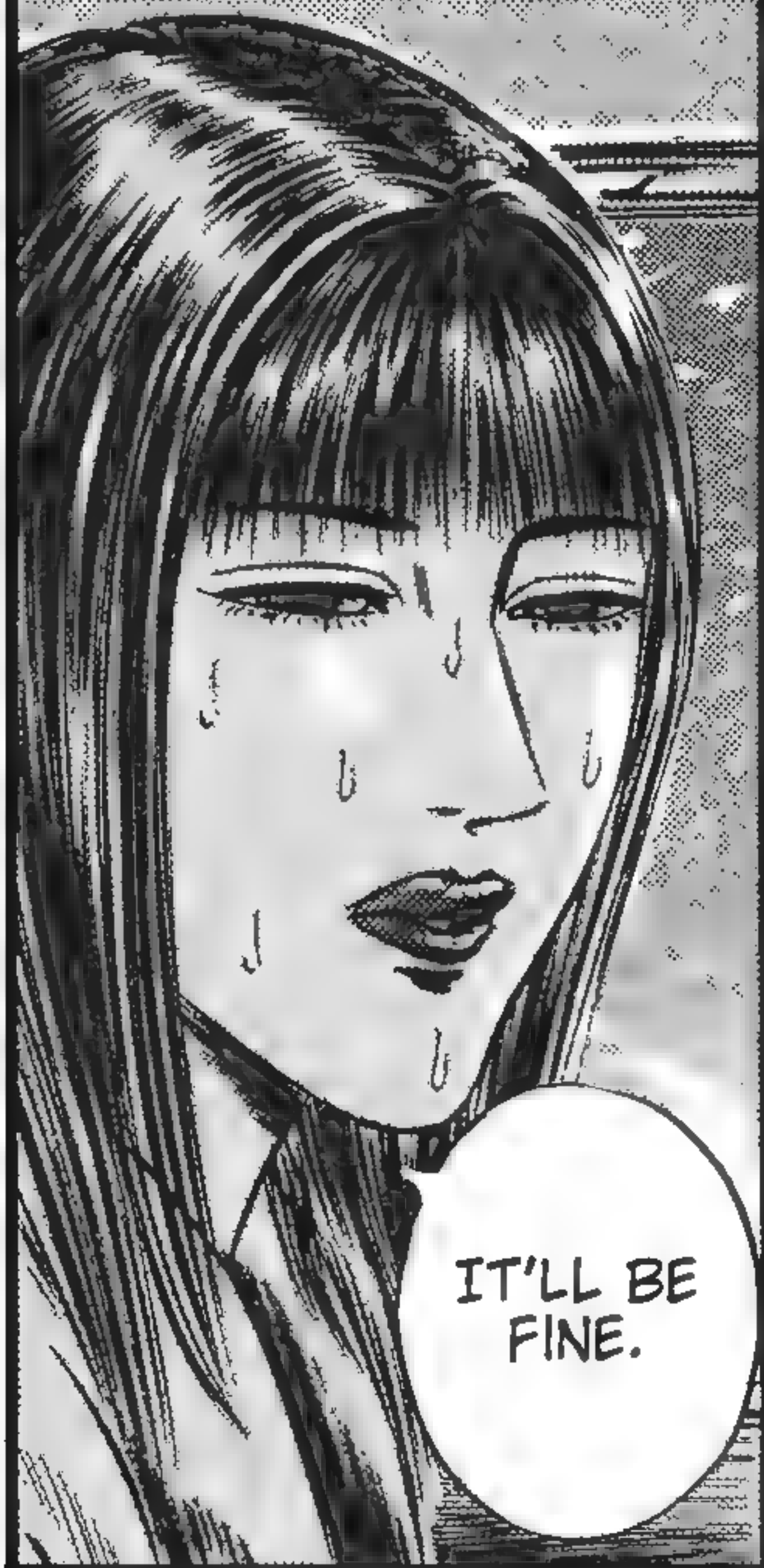








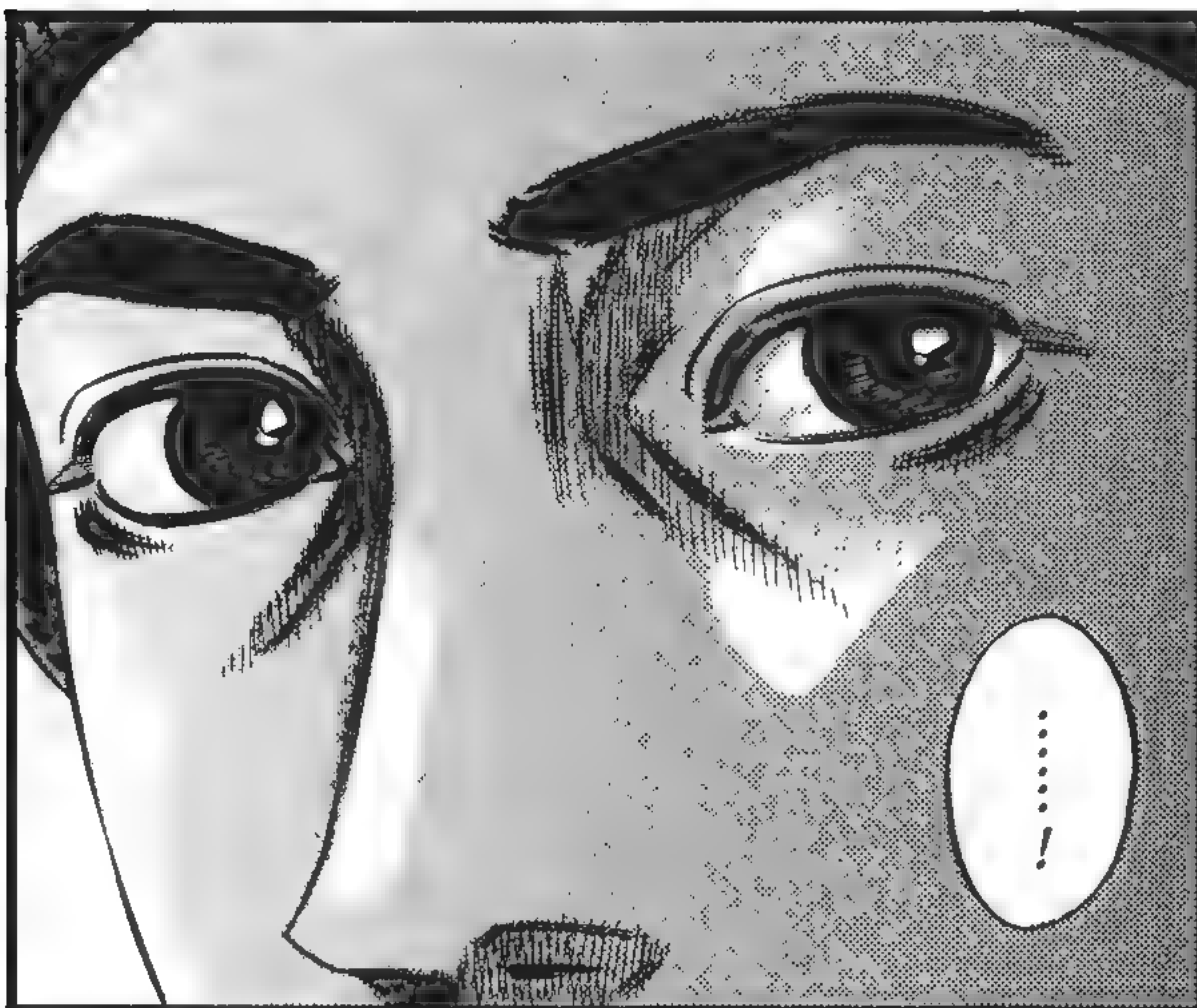




IT'LL BE FINE.



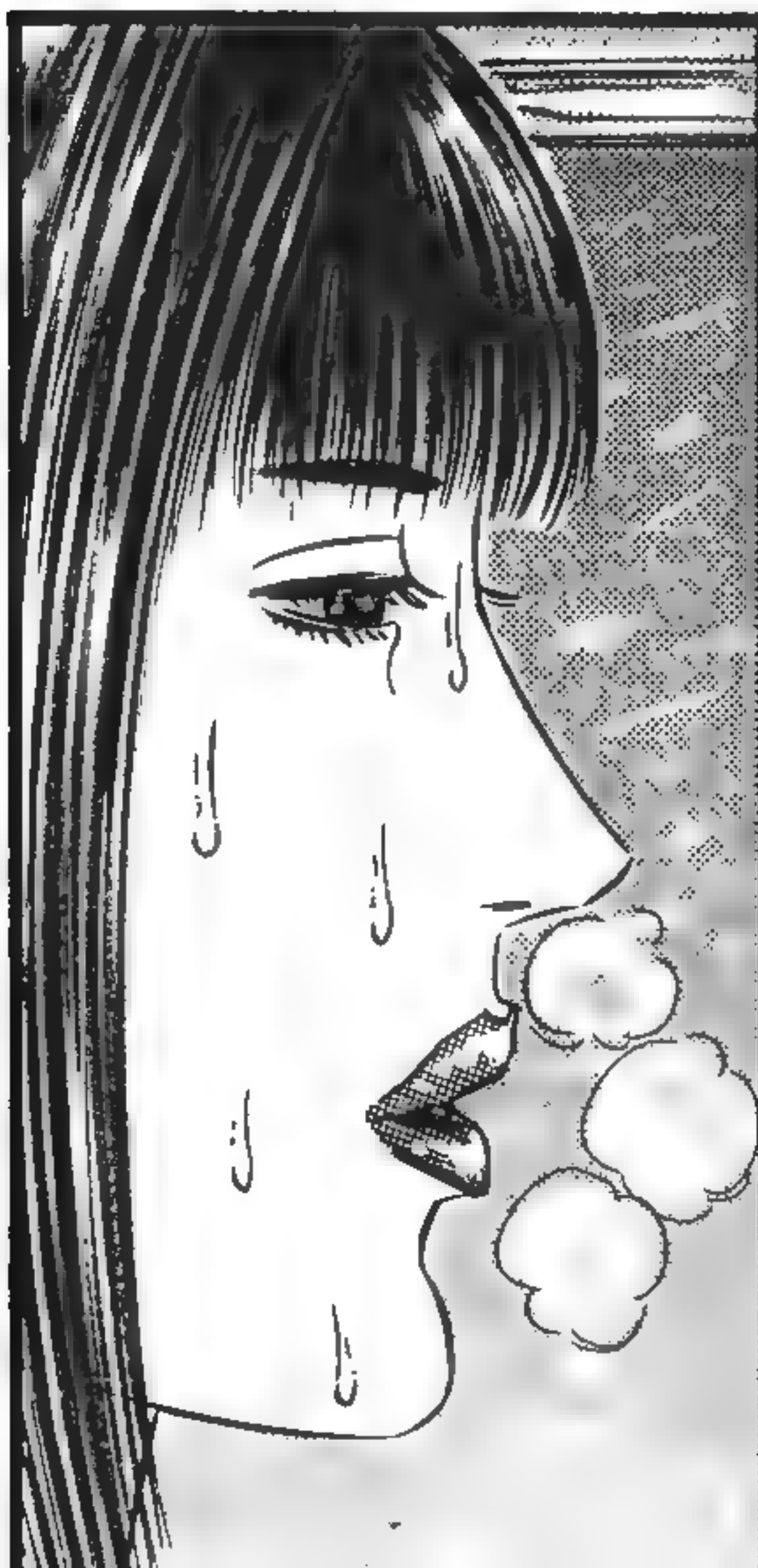
THIS CAR BARELY FITS ME! THERE'S NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH SLEEPING SPACE FOR TWO!



.....
!



IF I CURL UP INTO A LITTLE BALL LIKE YOU DO, WE CAN MAKE IT WORK.



ANYWAY, CAN WE GET OUT OF HERE, PLEASE?



WHERE
TO?



NOT BACK TO
THE HOTEL,
YOU MEAN?

NOT BACK
THERE,
THAT'S FOR
SURE.

!



START
DRIVING,
WOULD
YOU?

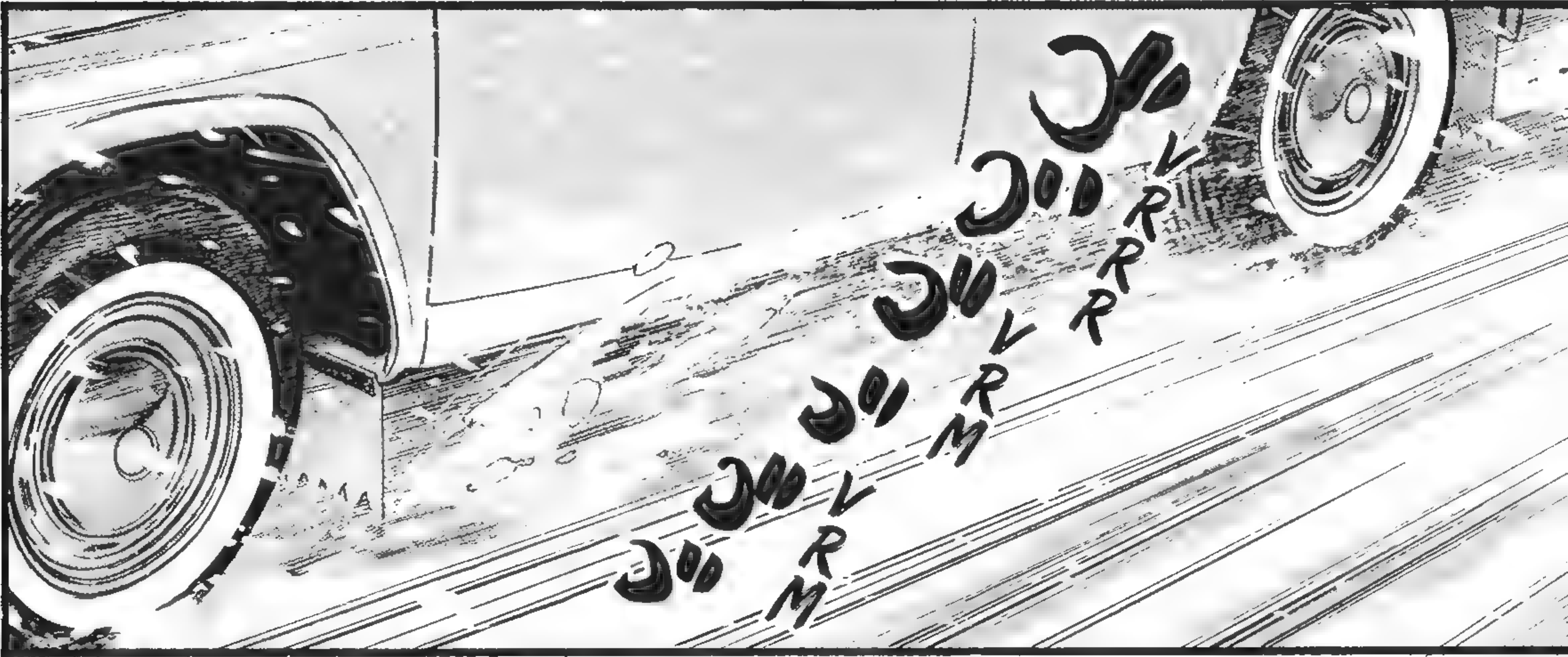
JUST...

SO IF NOT
THERE, THEN
WHERE?

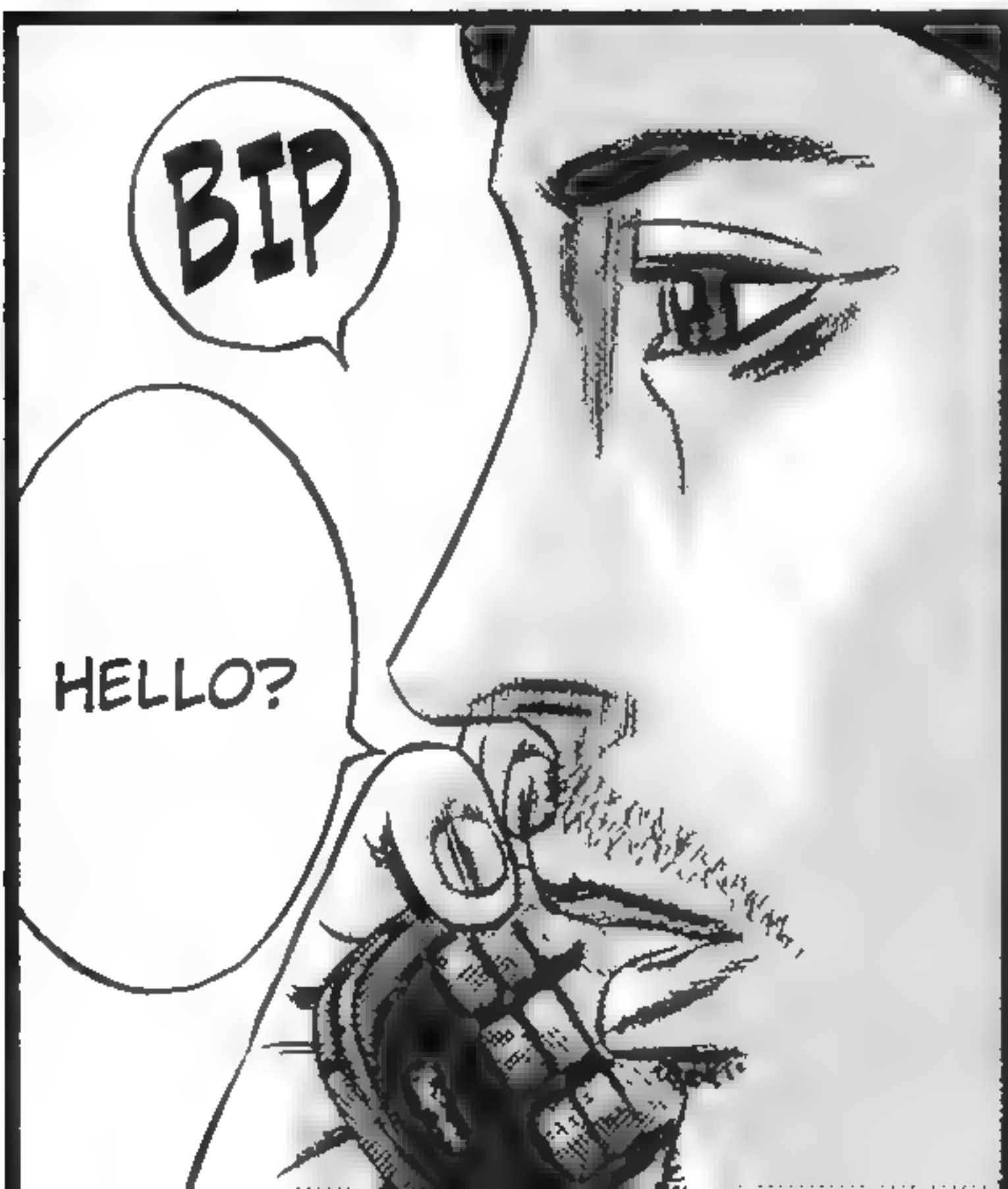
OKAY.







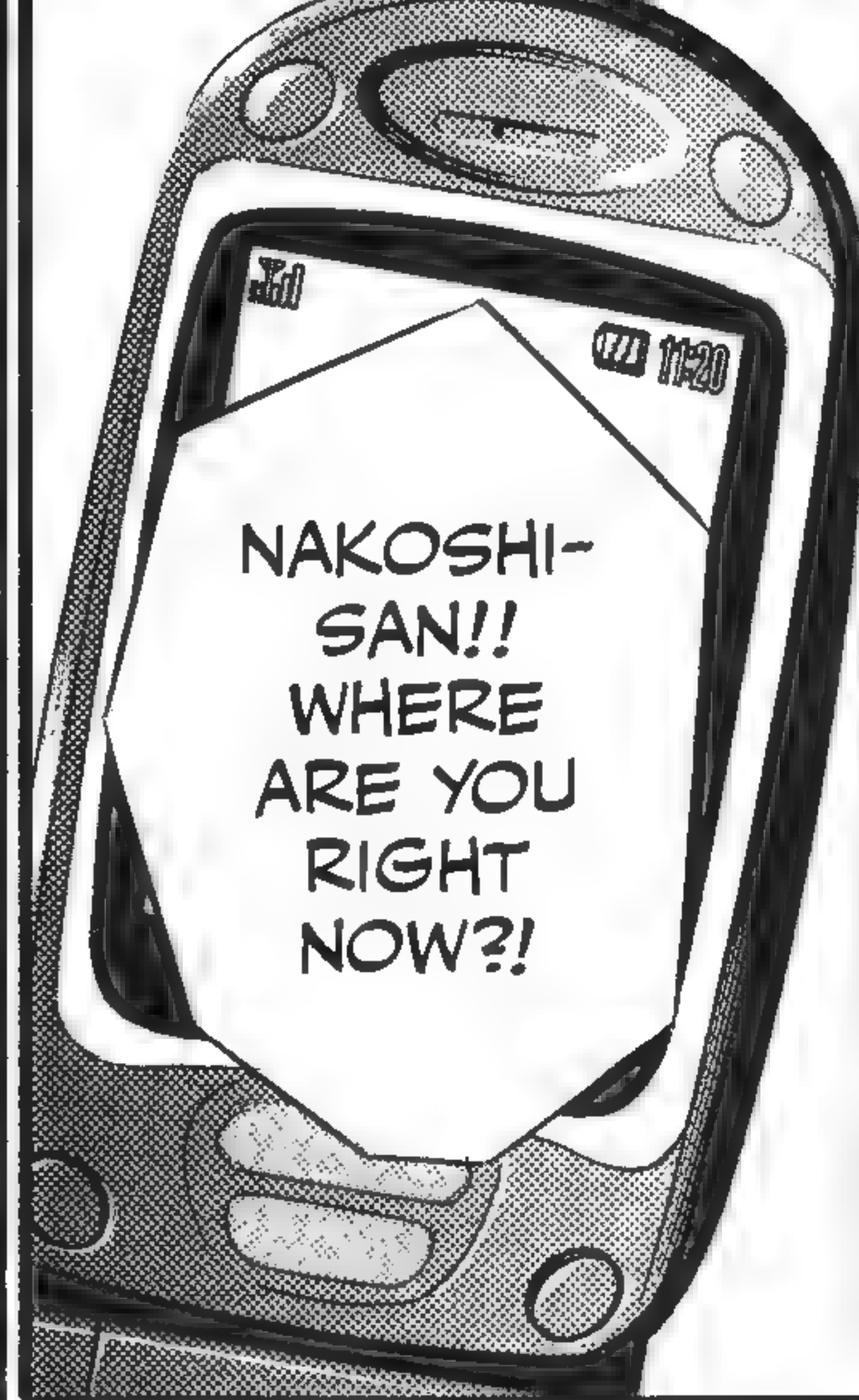
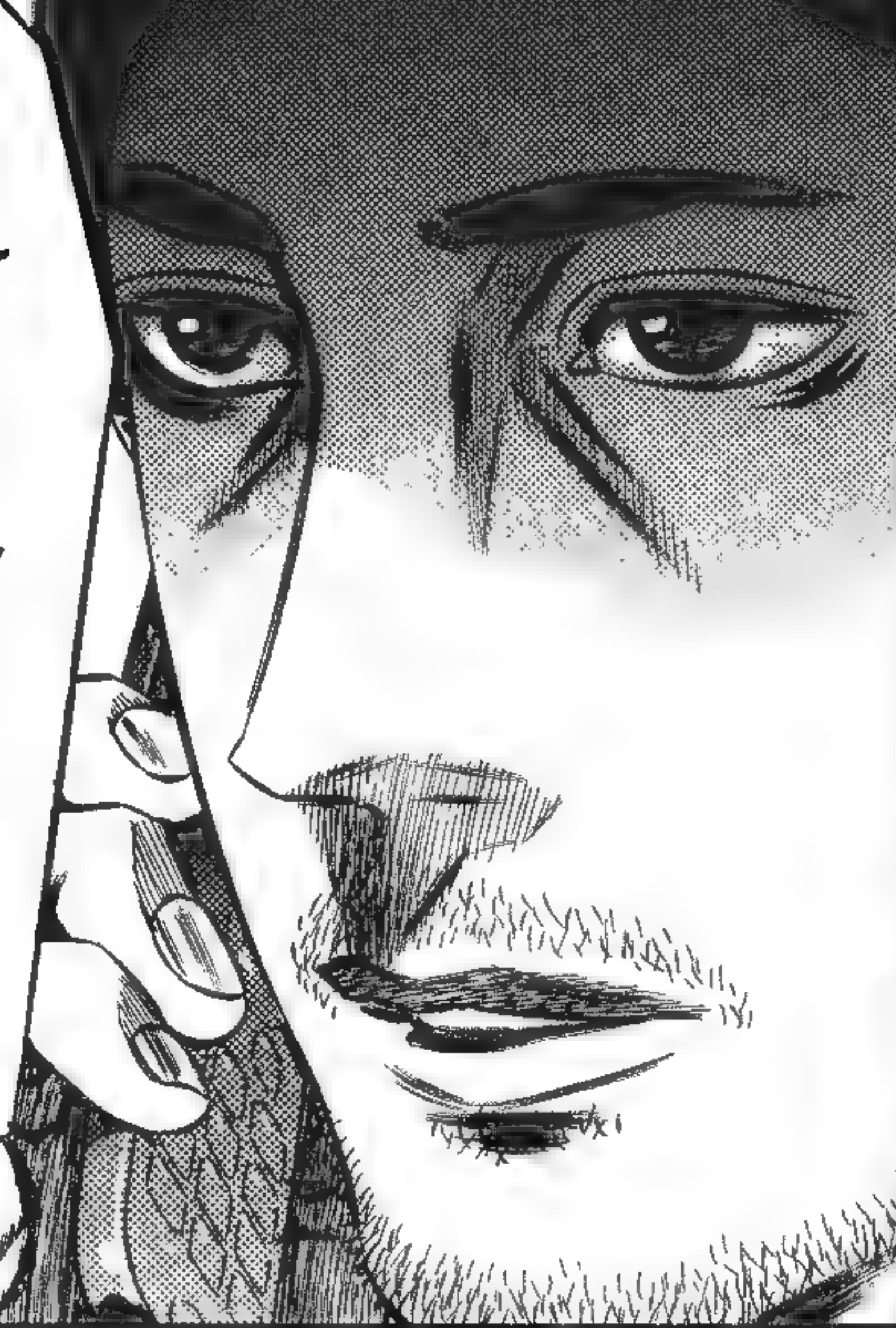
Incoming C
lto
0706



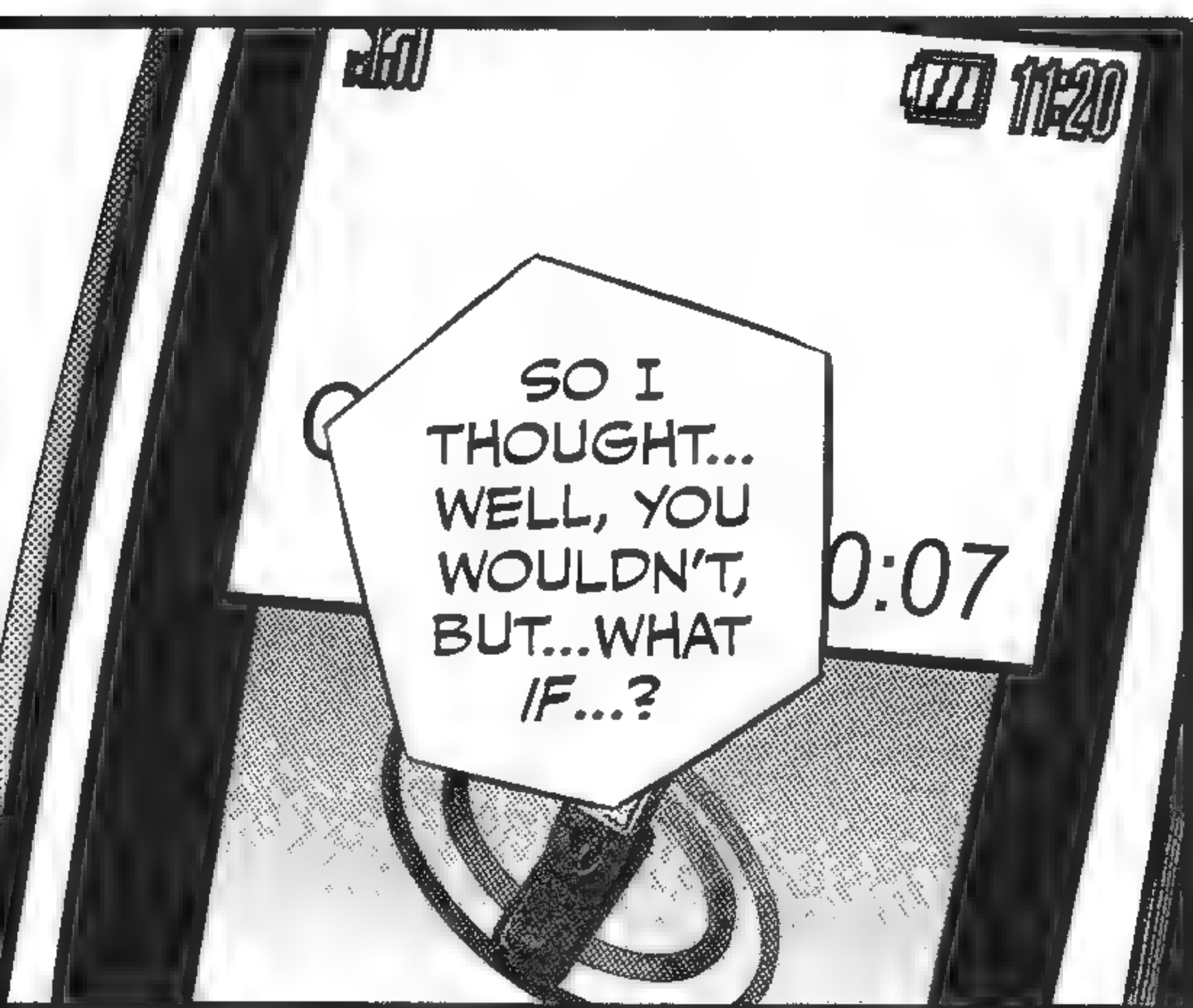


YEAH.

I JUST
FOUND OUT
THAT THAT
HOMELESS
GUY FROM
YESTERDAY
FREAKING
KILLED
HIMSELF
THIS
MORNING!!

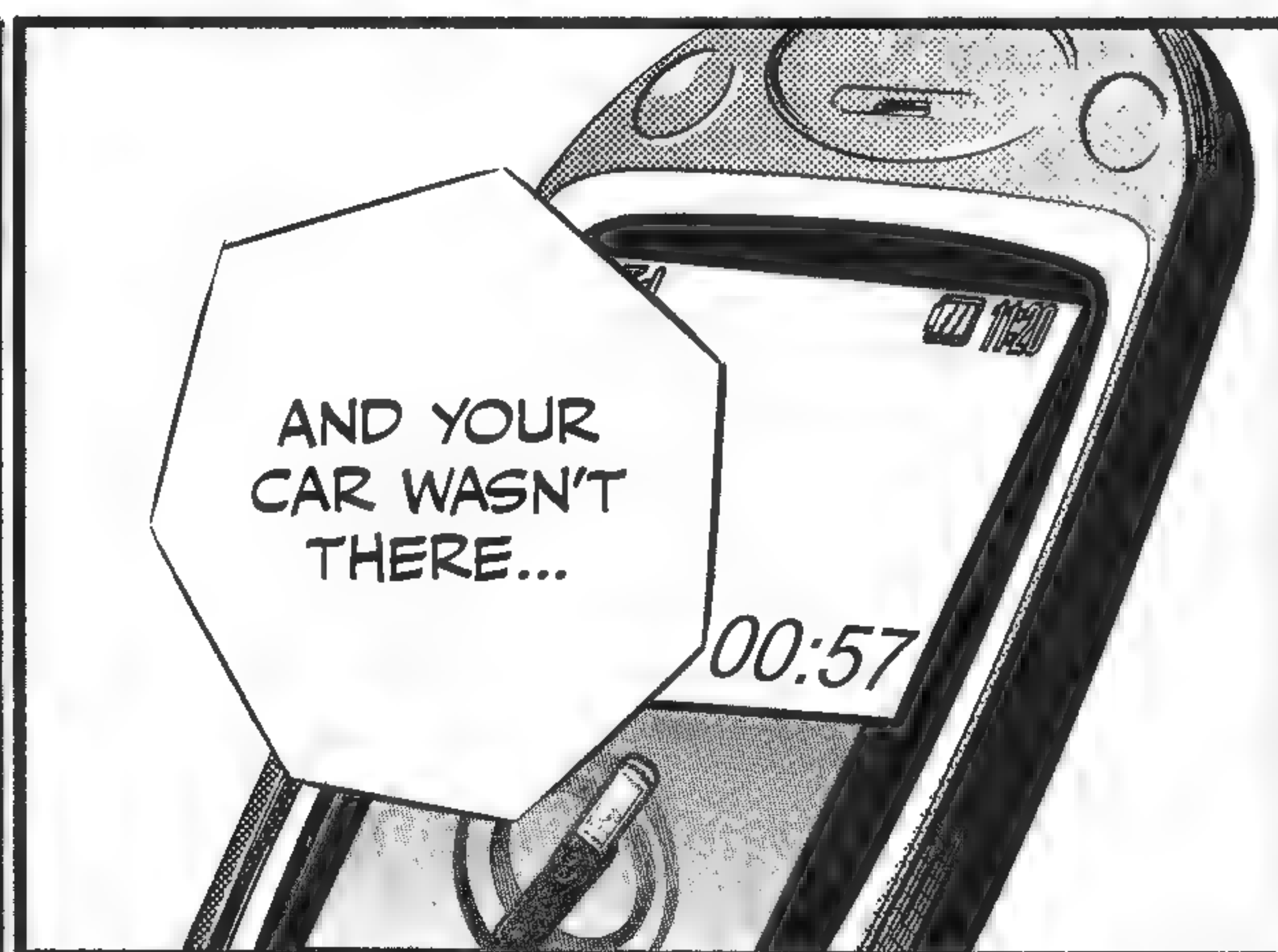


NAKOSHI-
SAN!!
WHERE
ARE YOU
RIGHT
NOW?!



SO I
THOUGHT...
WELL, YOU
WOULDN'T,
BUT...WHAT
IF...?

0:07



AND YOUR
CAR WASN'T
THERE...

00:57



NAH.

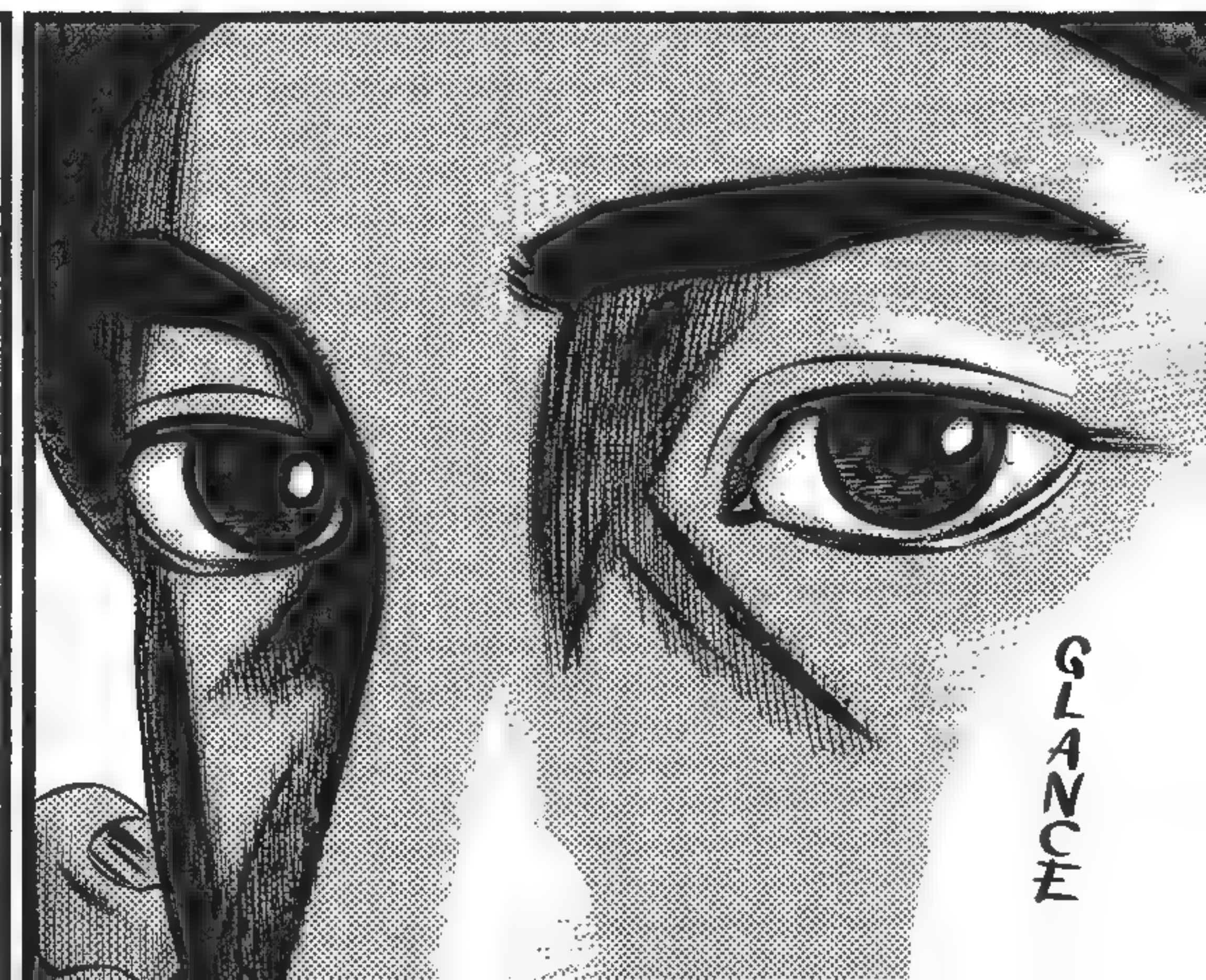
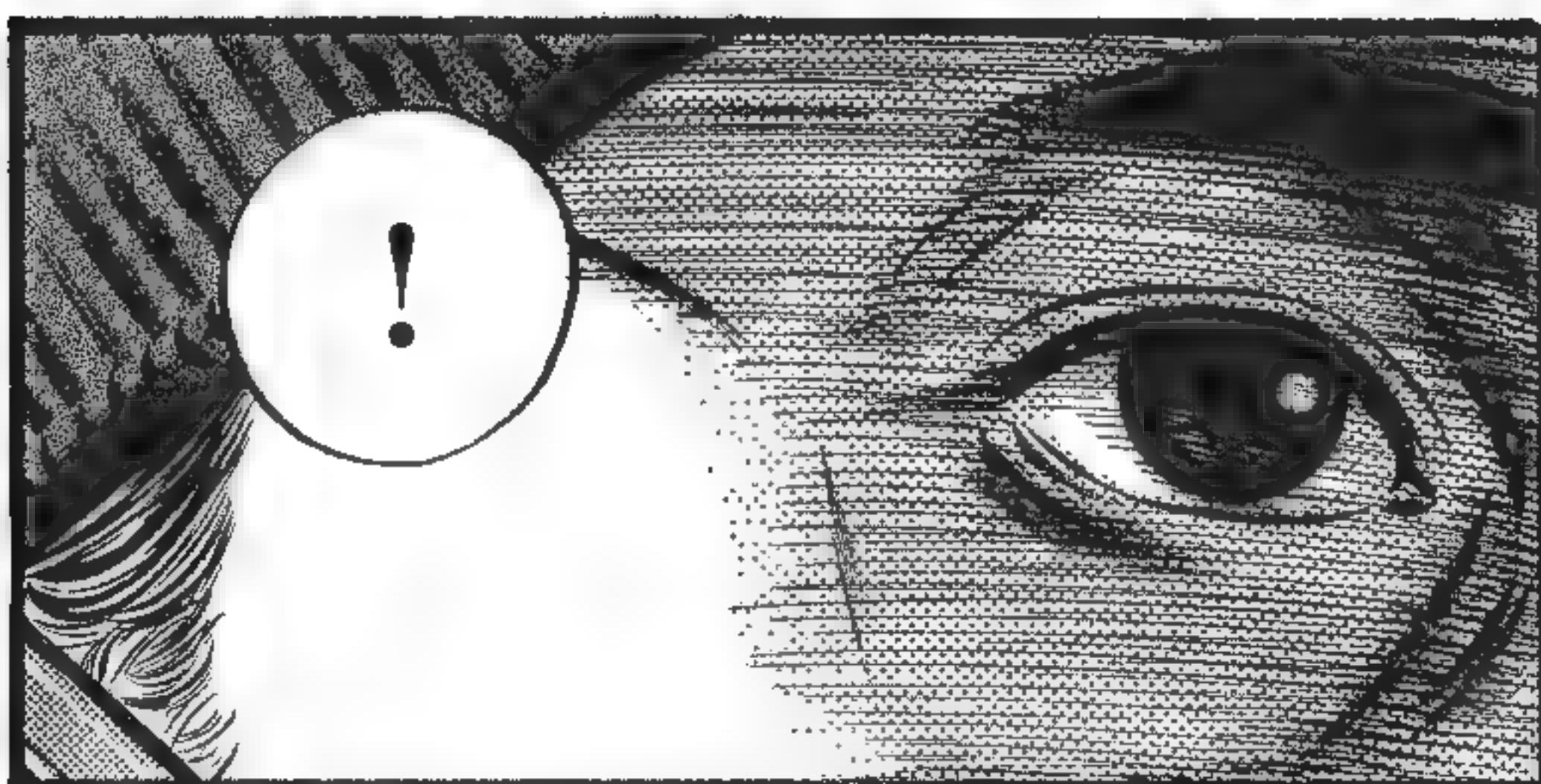
WHAT?

DID
YOU SAY
SOME-
THING??



UNLIKE HIM,
I'VE GOT
SOMEPLACE
TO GO.

MUTTER

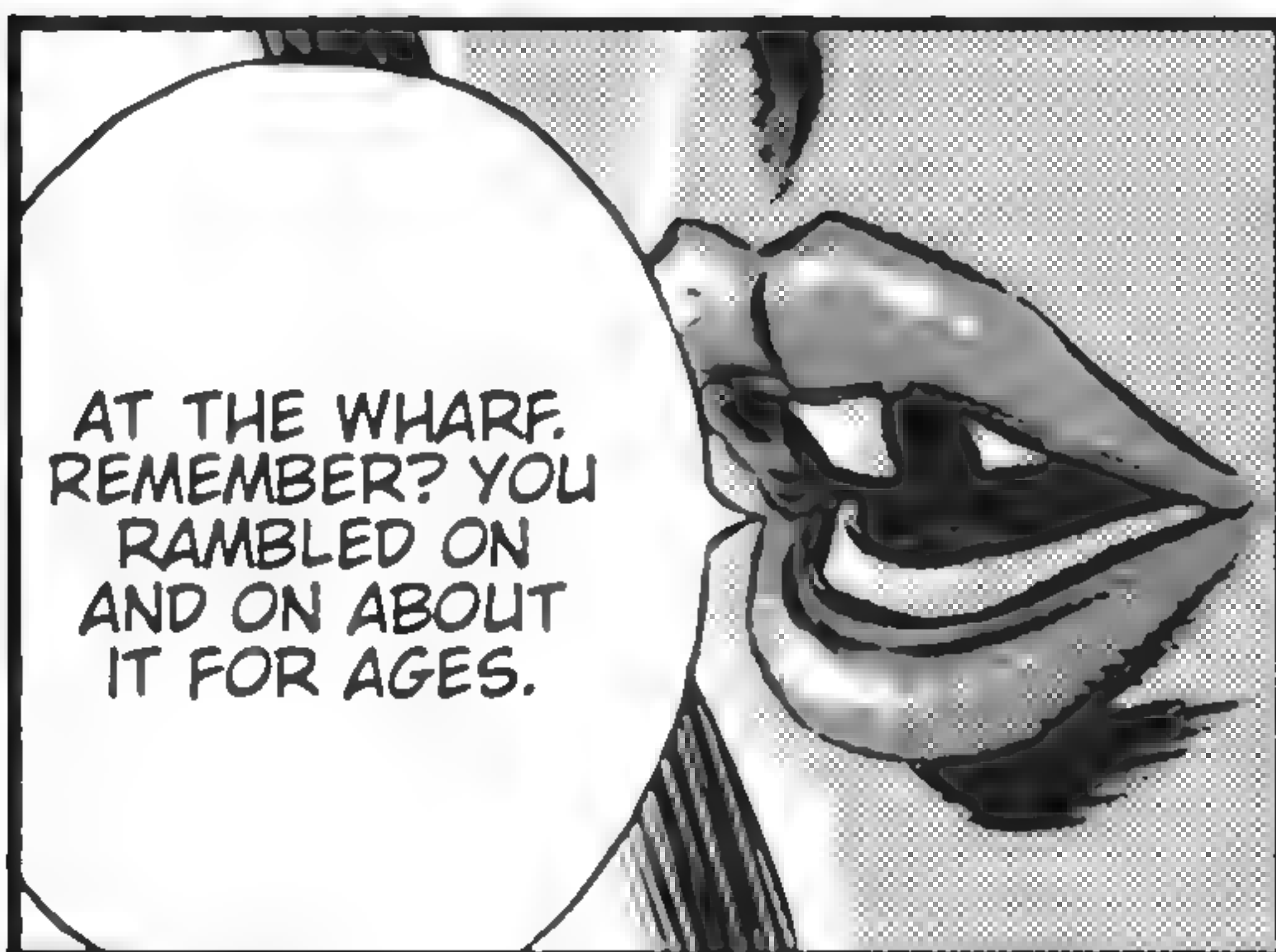






IT'S LIKE A
BLIZZARD
OUT THERE.

EXCEPT
THIS
WEATHER,
I GUESS.



AT THE WHARF.
REMEMBER? YOU
RAMBLLED ON
AND ON ABOUT
IT FOR AGES.



TELL
ME...

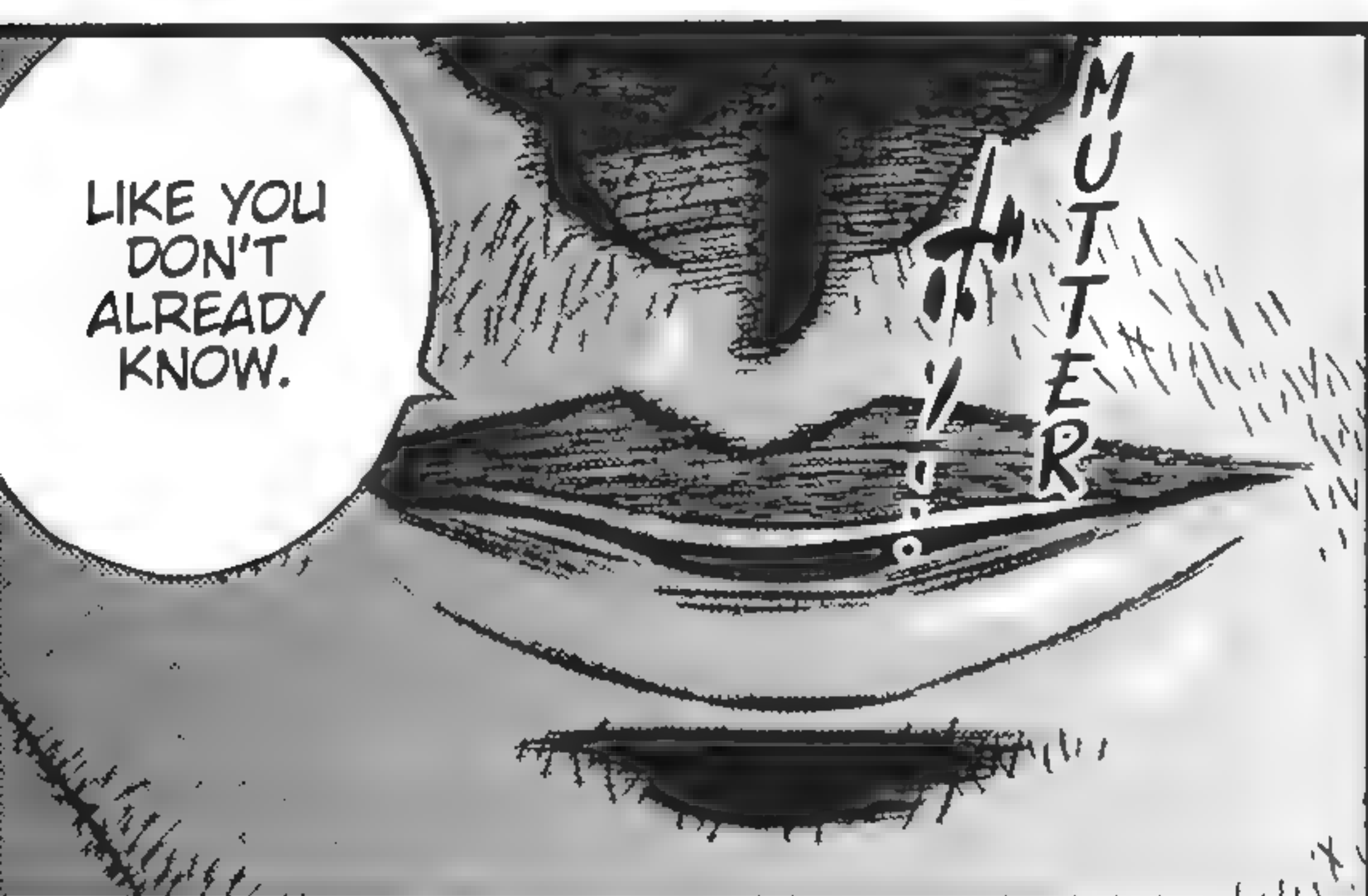


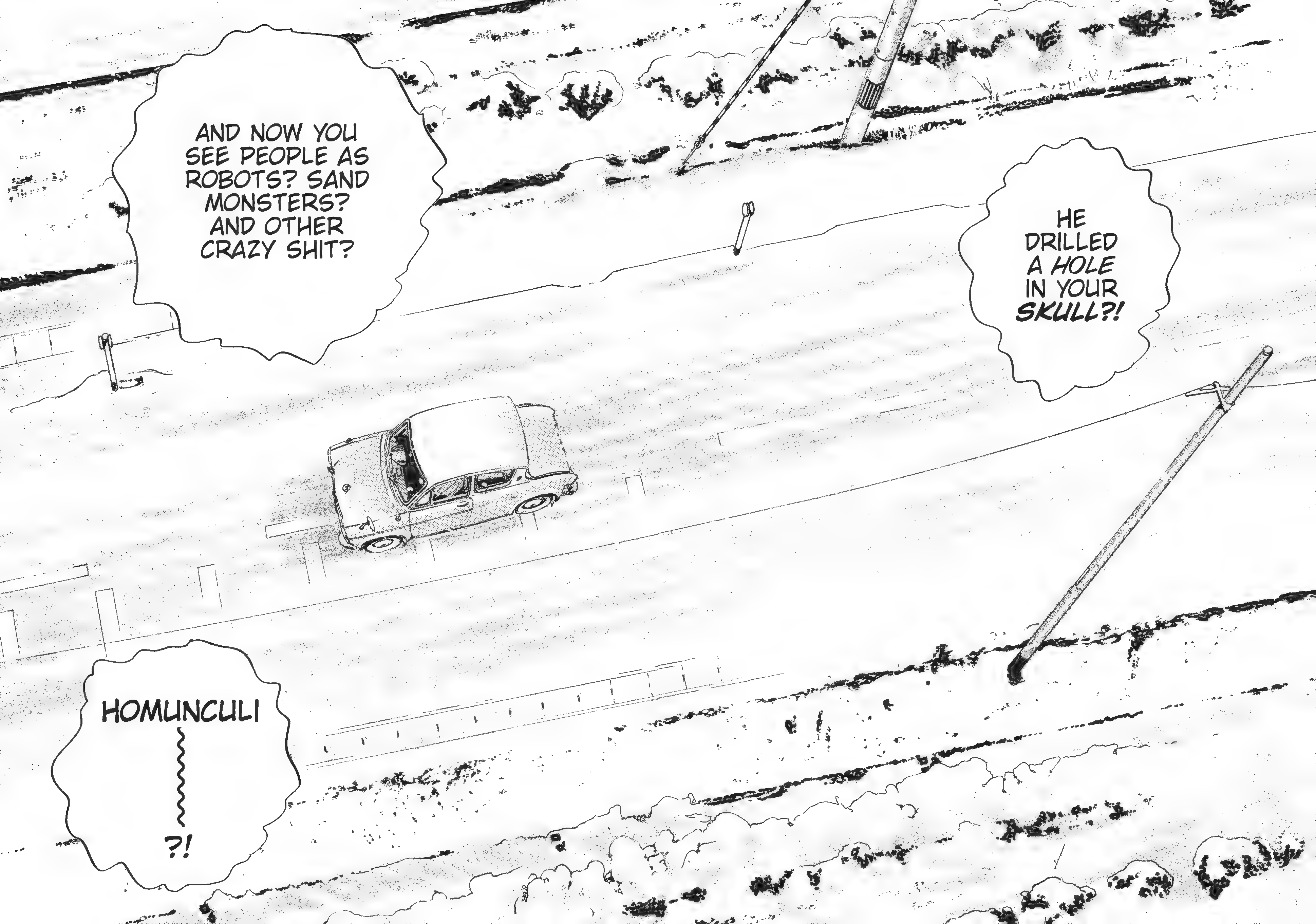
HUH?

YESTERDAY...
WHAT WERE
YOU SEEING?







A black and white comic panel. In the center, a car is driving on a road that curves to the right. To the left of the road is a fence. In the background, a large drill is visible, with its handle extending from the top right towards the center. The ground is uneven with some vegetation. There are three speech bubbles: one in the top left, one in the top right, and one in the bottom left.

AND NOW YOU
SEE PEOPLE AS
ROBOTS? SAND
MONSTERS?
AND OTHER
CRAZY SHIT?

HE
DRILLED
A HOLE
IN YOUR
SKULL?!

HOMUNCULI

?!



THAT
SOUNDS
LIKE MENTAL
ILLNESS!

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

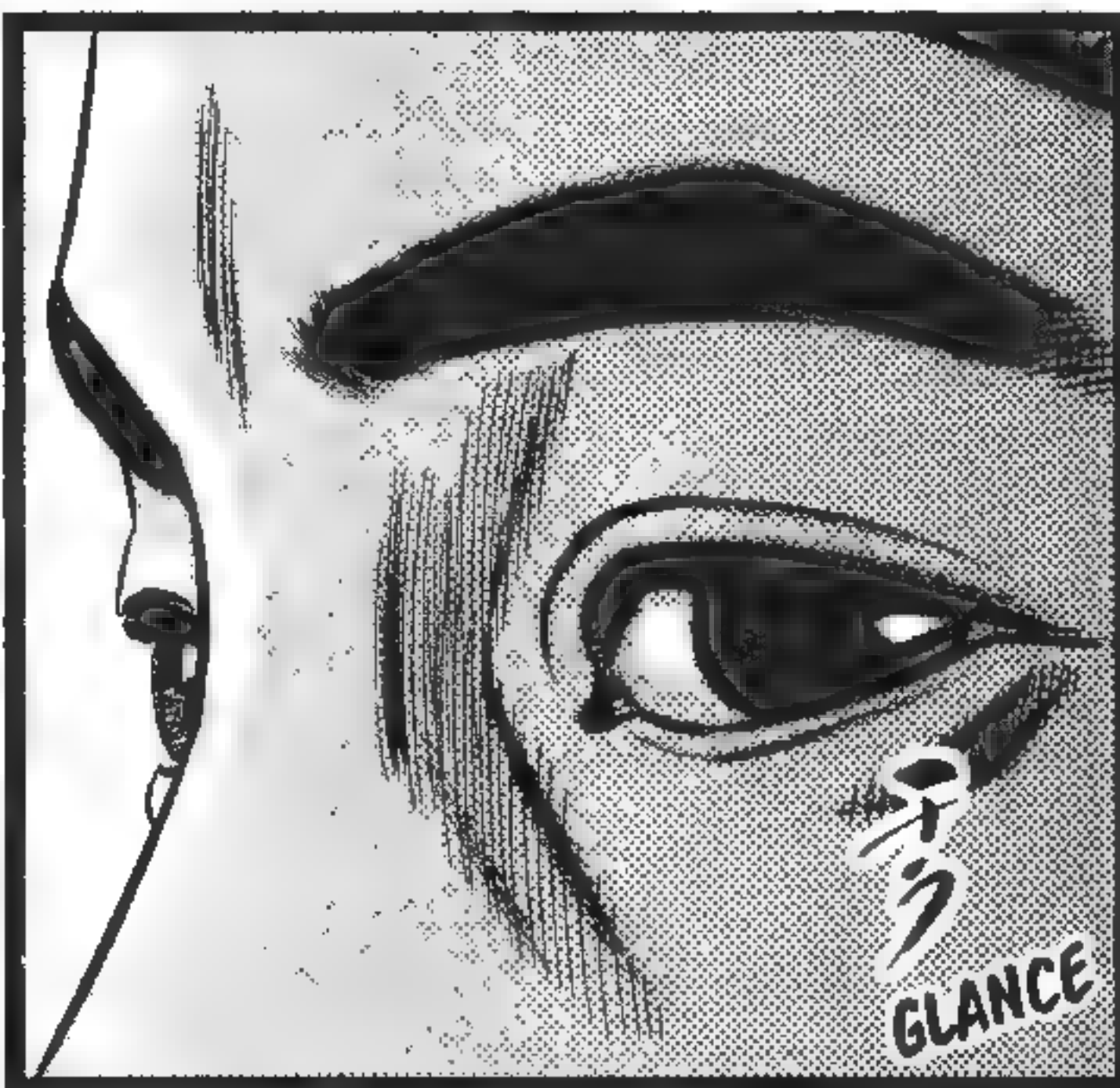


YEAH...

I MIGHT
VERY
WELL BE.



YOU MUST
JUST BE
HALLUCINATING
OR DREAMING
OR SOMETHING!



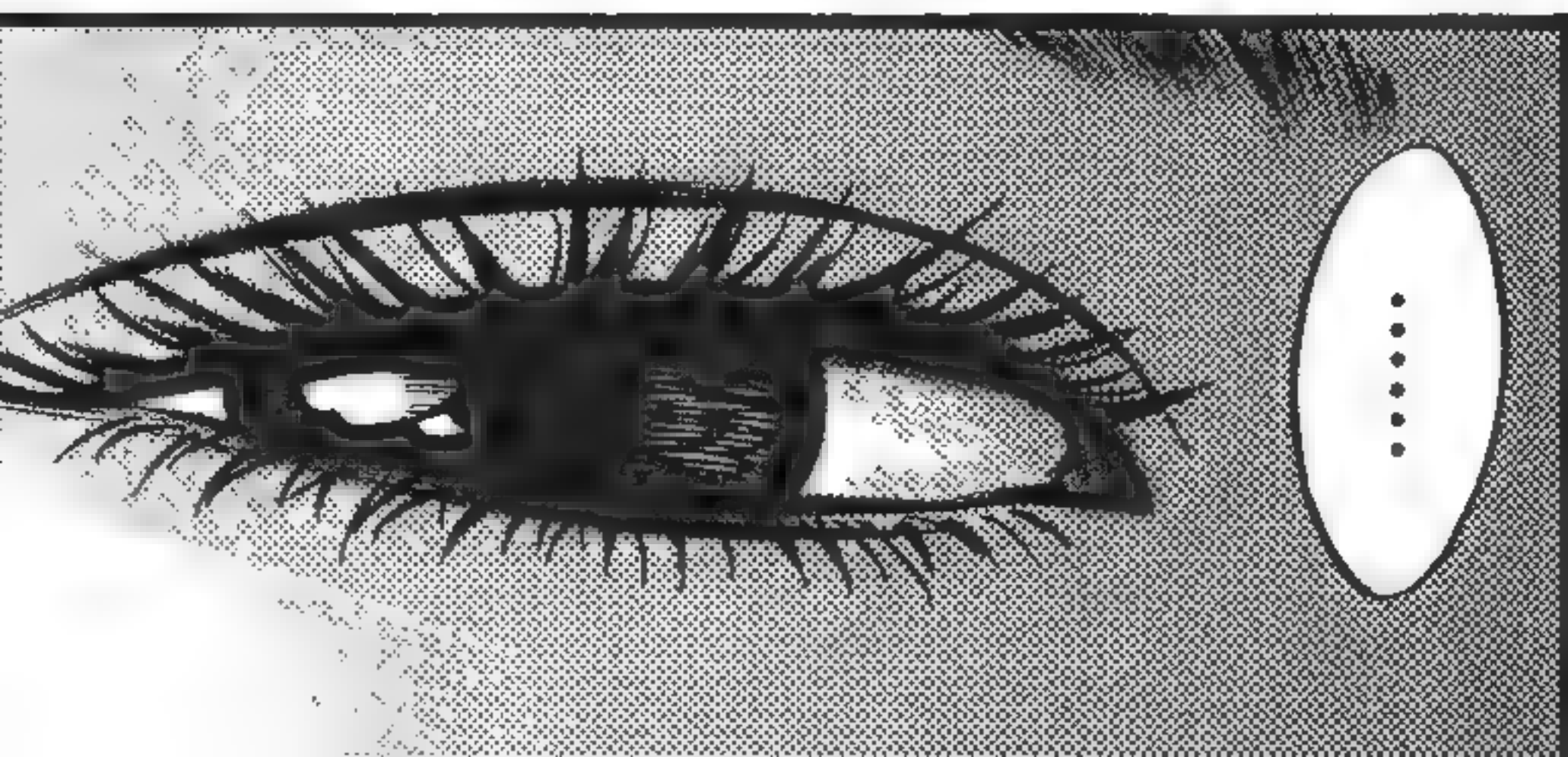
HONESTLY,
HOW STUPID
DO YOU THINK I
AM? YOU'RE NOT
ACTUALLY TALKING
TO ME WITH A HOLE
IN YOUR SKULL!



IT'S
RIGHT
HERE.

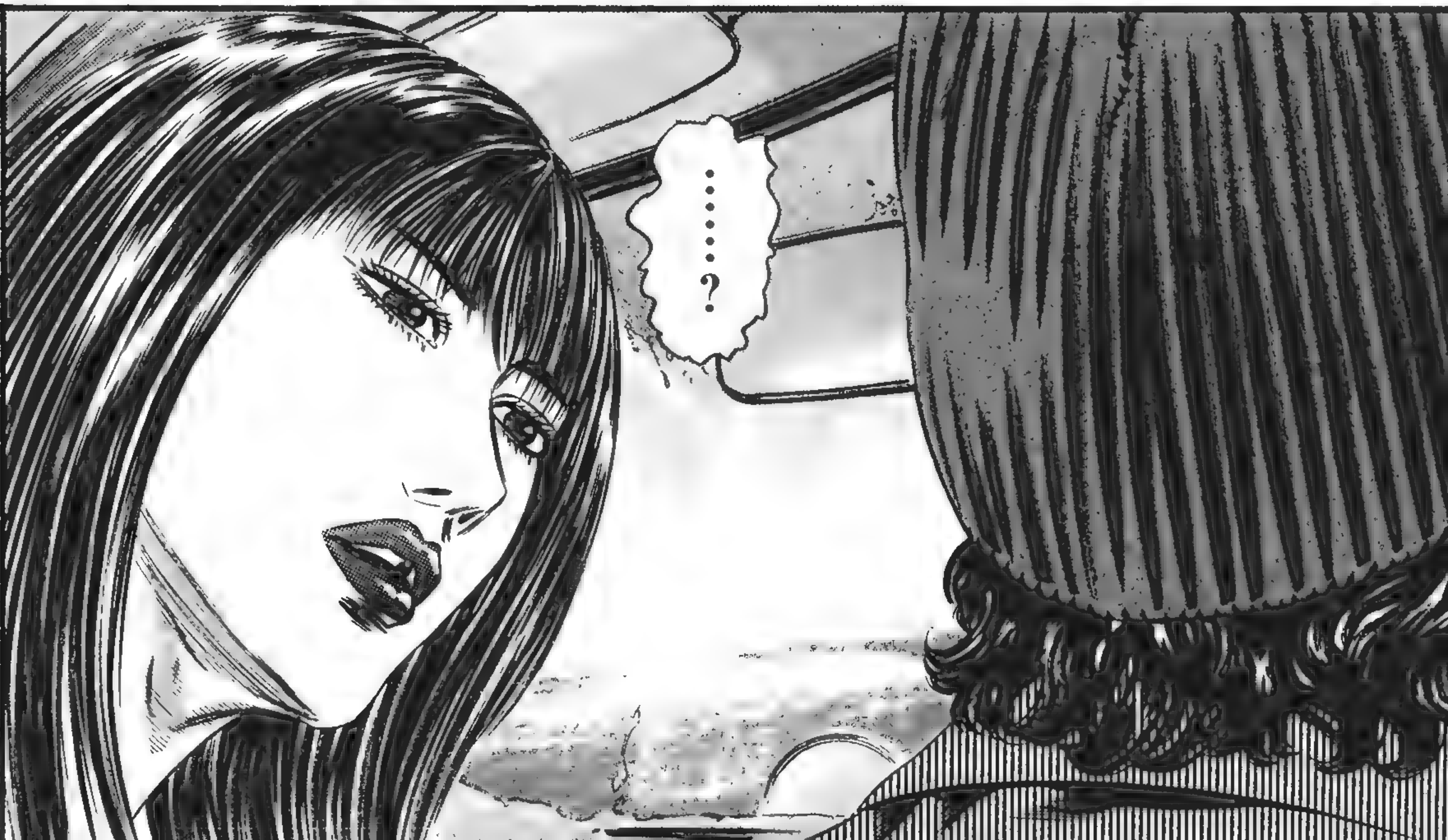
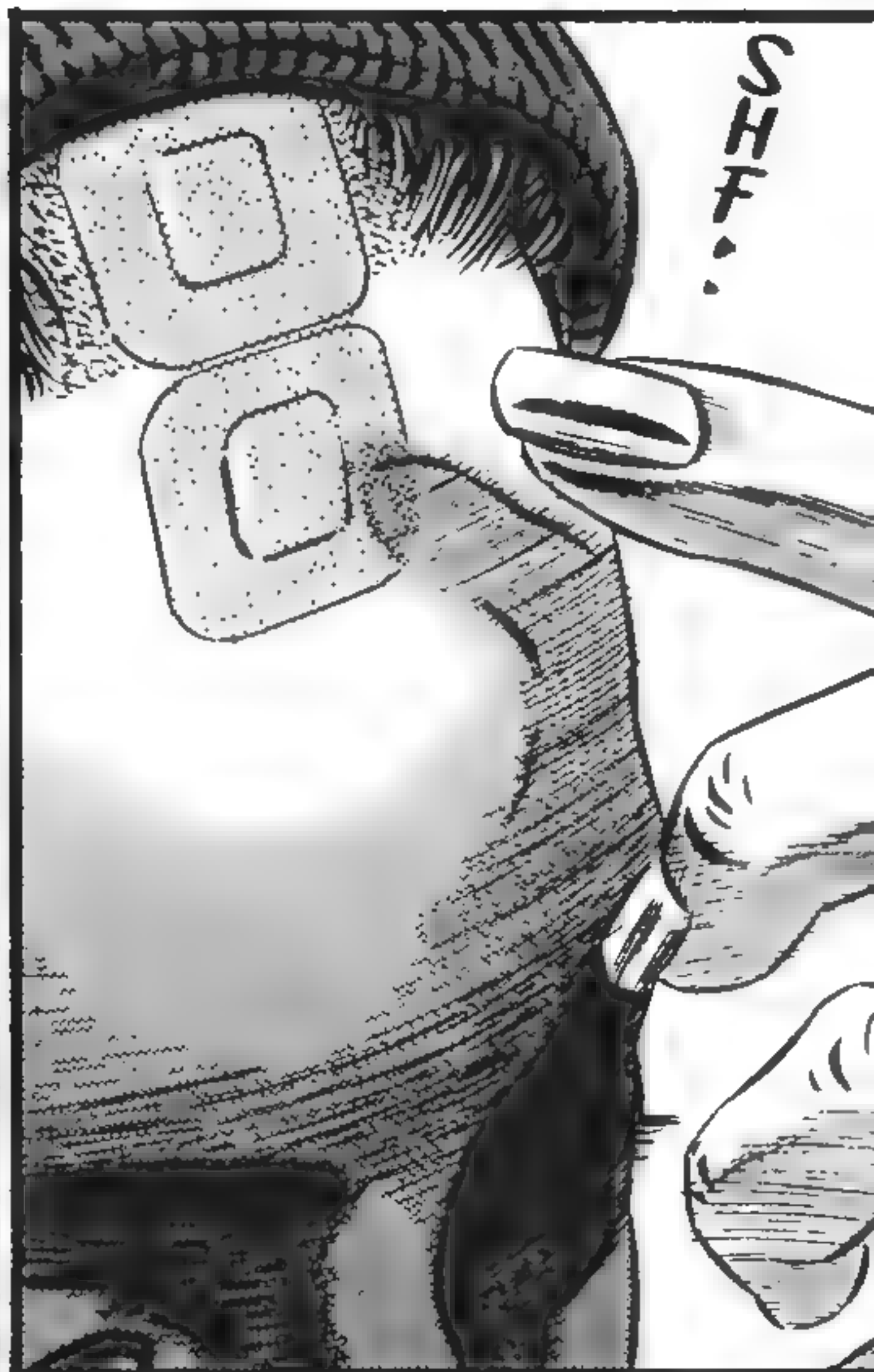


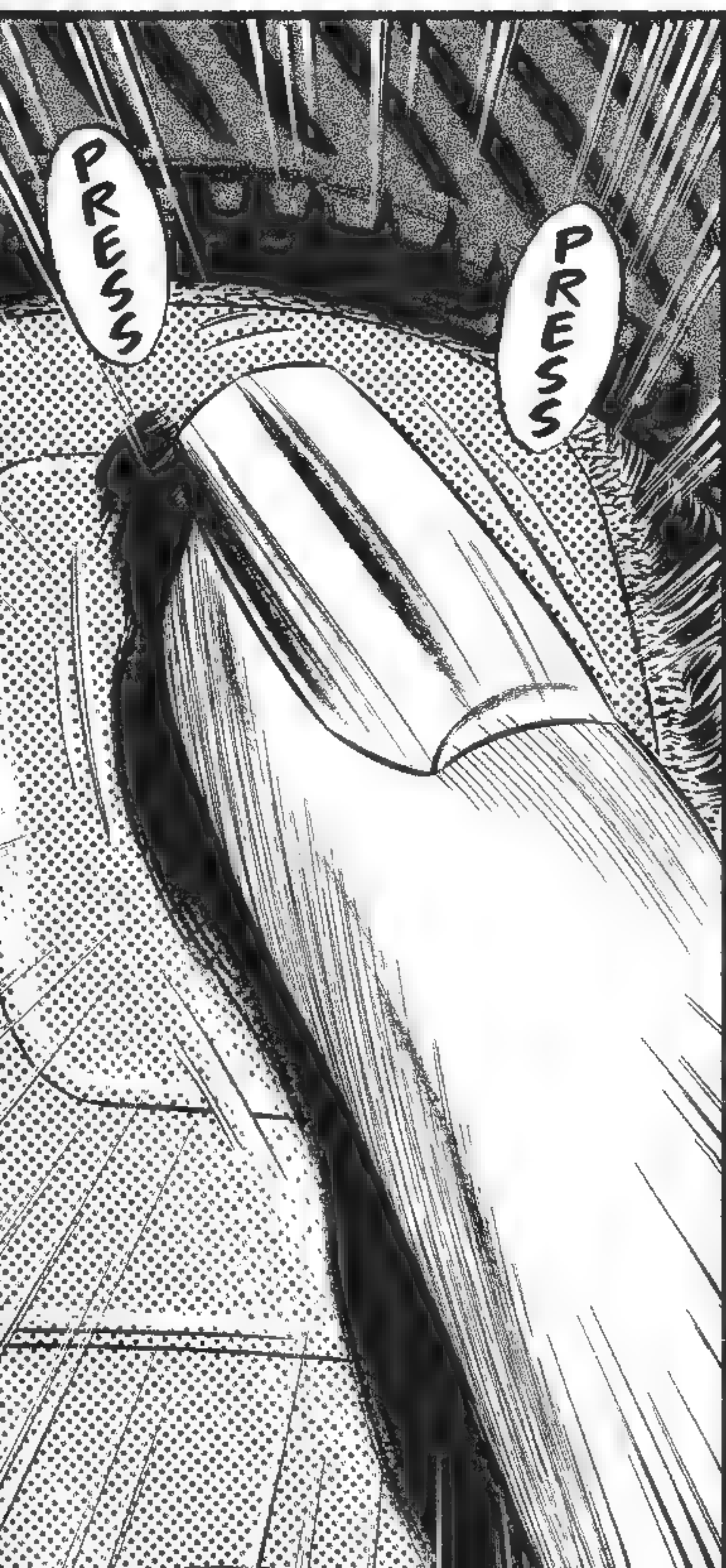
VERIFY THE
TRUTH WITH
YOUR OWN
HANDS.

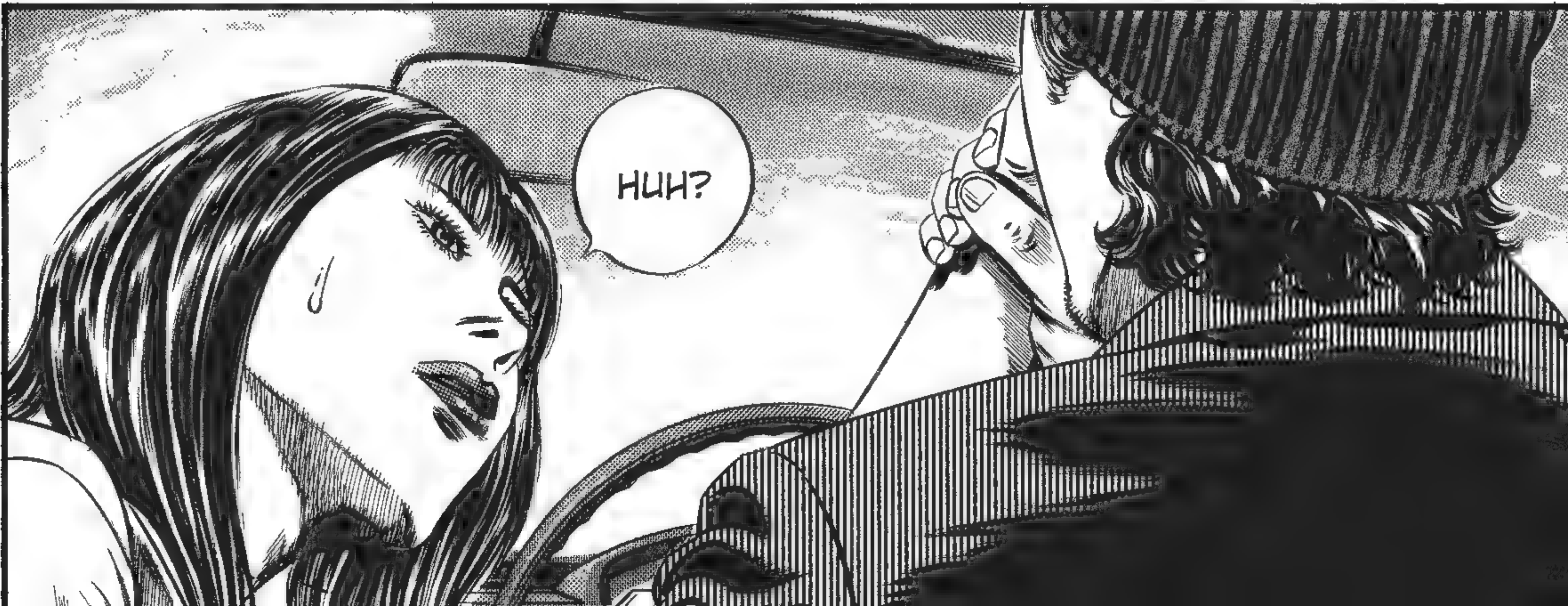
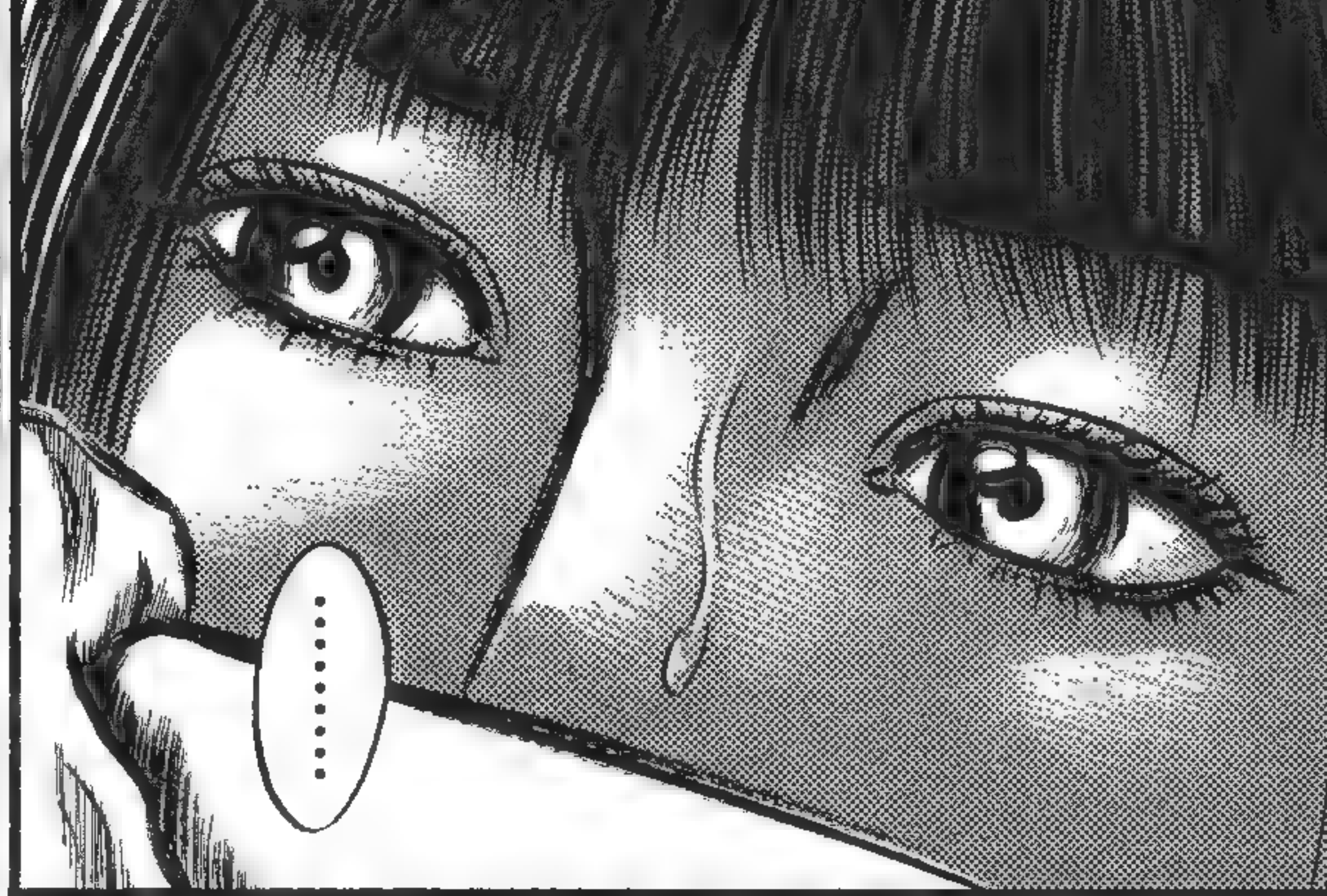


GO ON.
TOUCH IT.

WHAT
?!

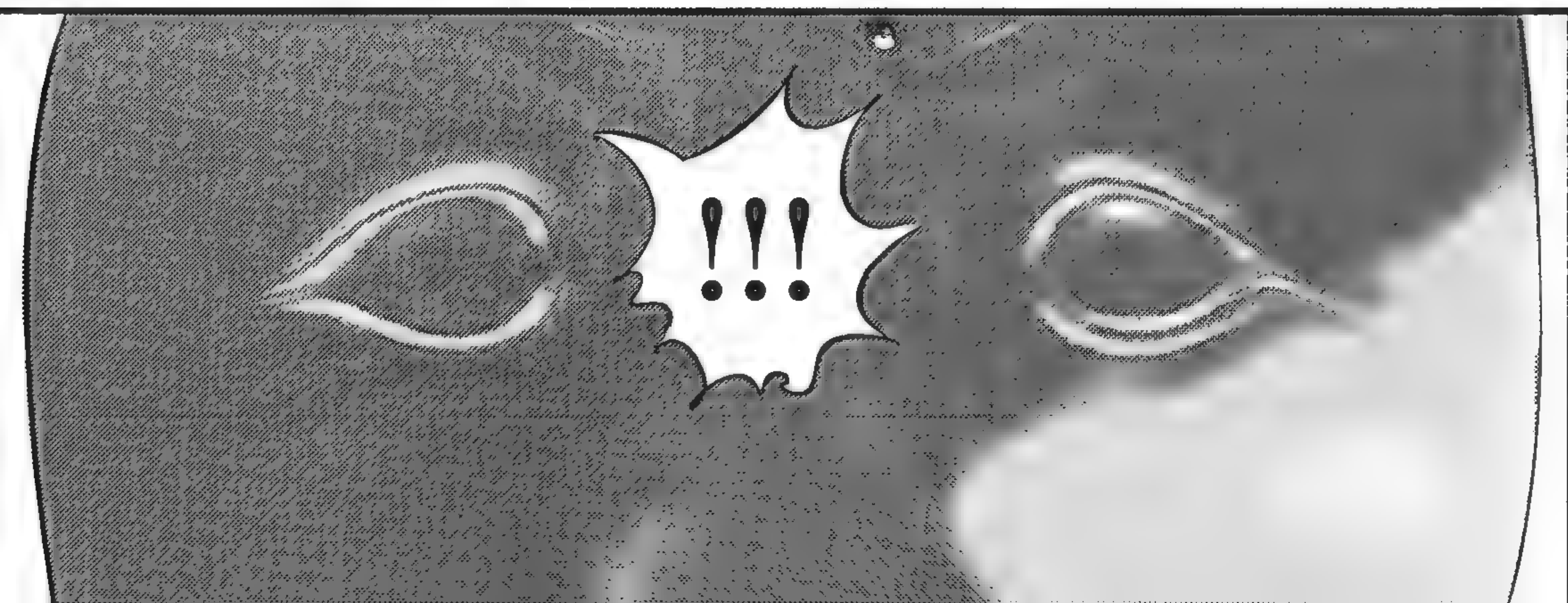














DON'T
LOOK
AT
ME!

WHHP

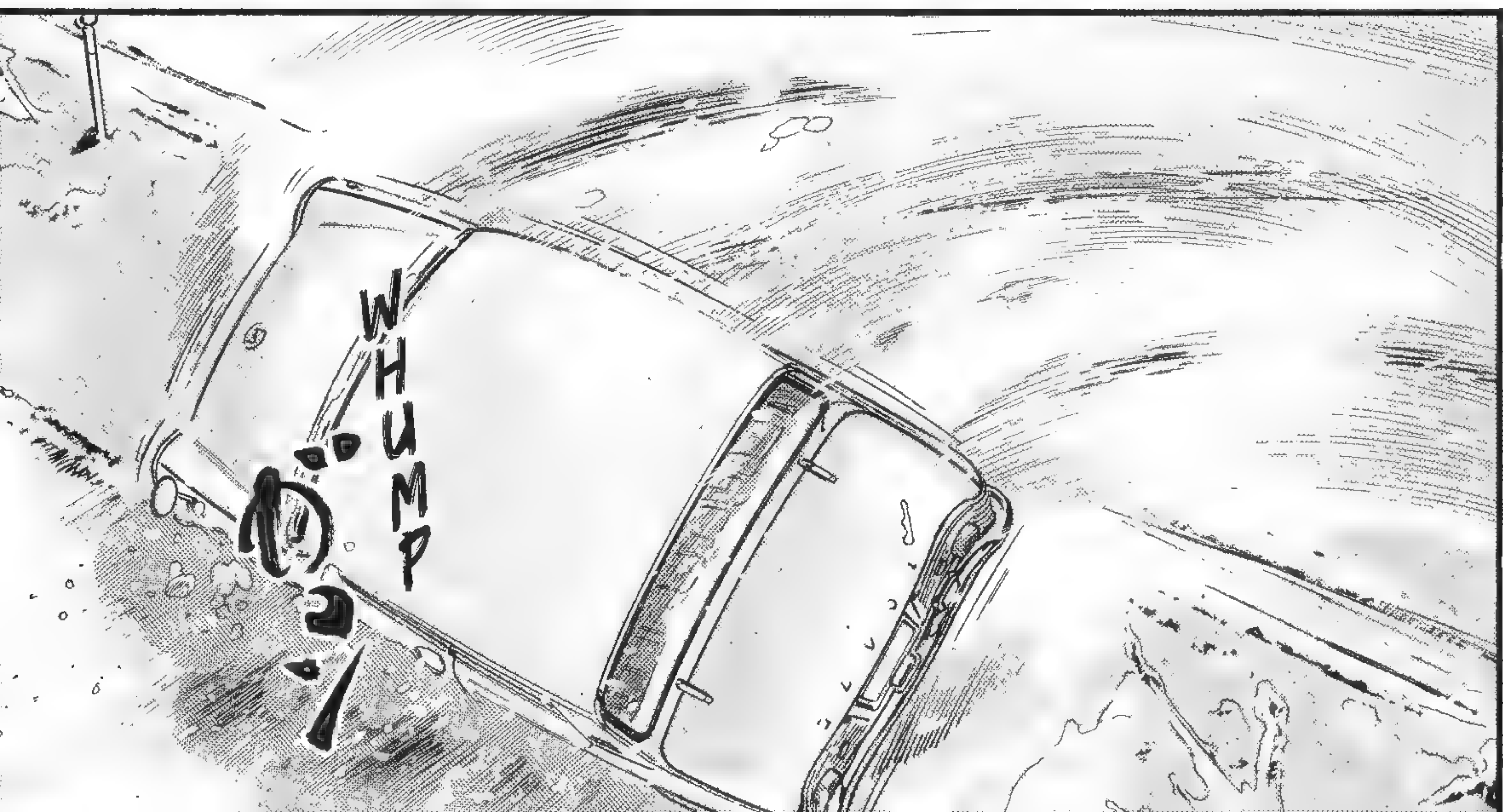
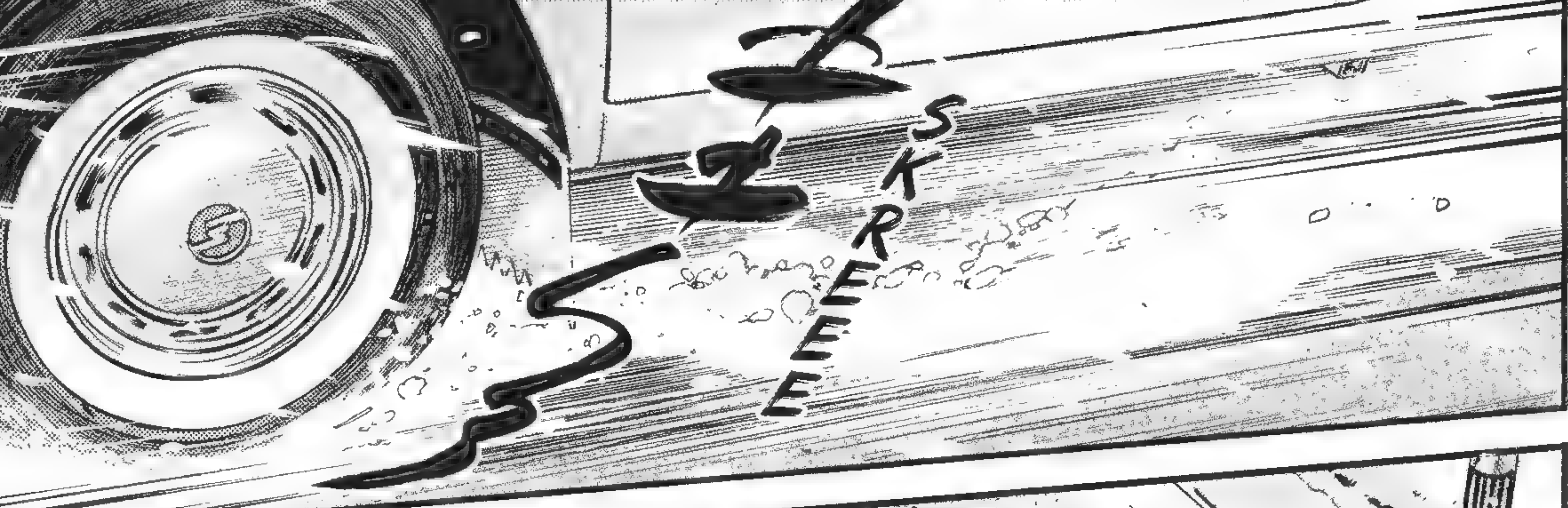
U

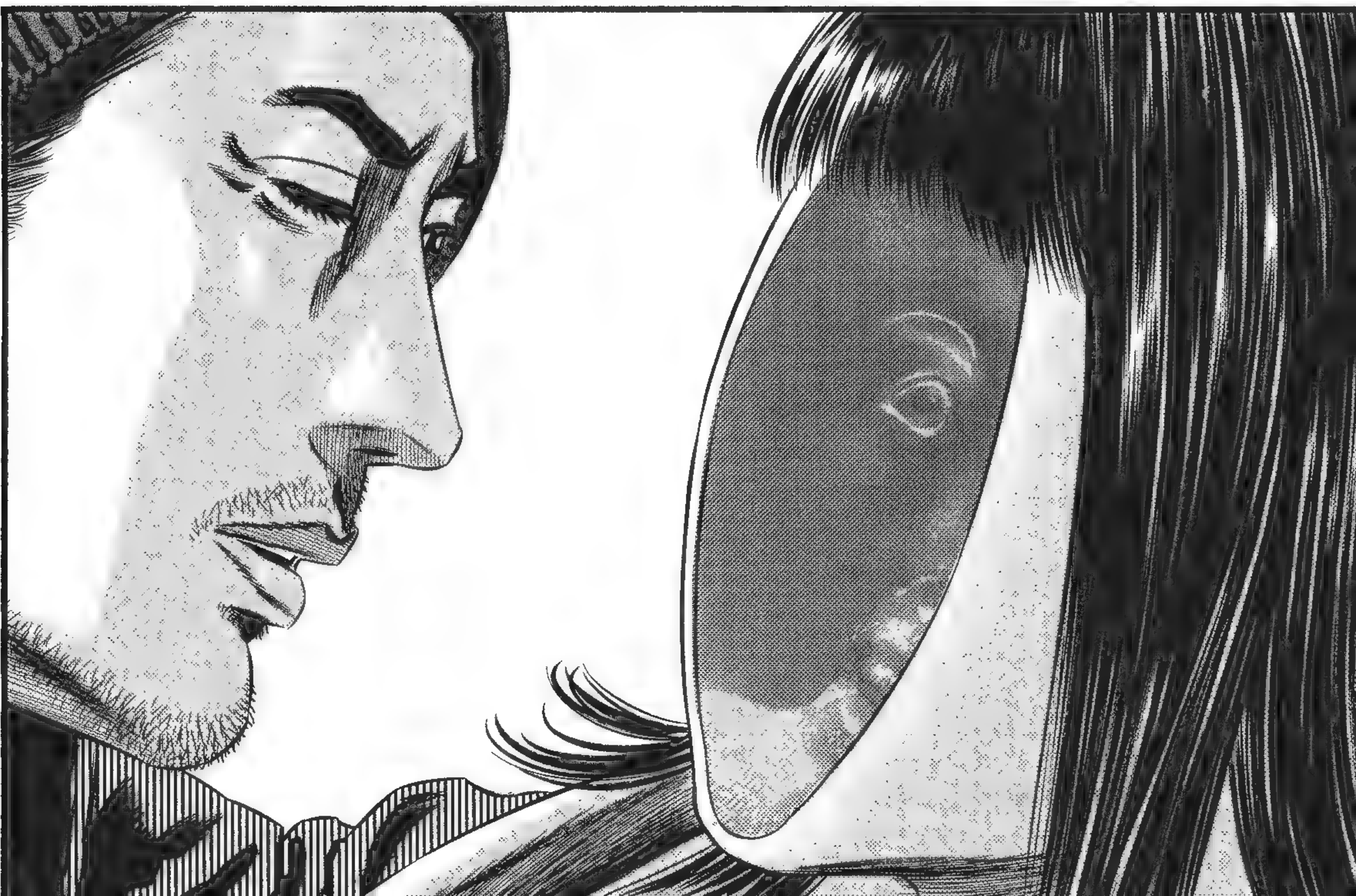


WHOA!

GNG

M

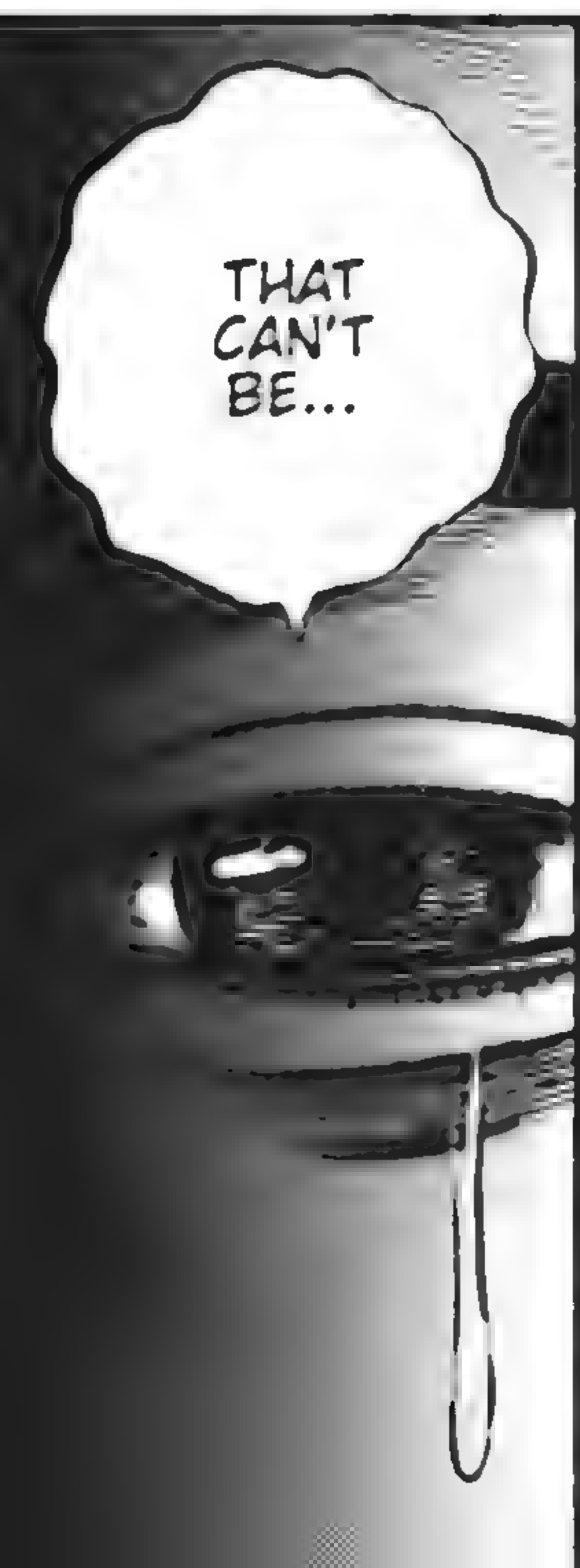






"IN THAT
CASE..."

"ARE YOU
SURE IT'S
NOT YOUR
FACE FROM
BEFORE THE
SURGERY?"



THAT
CAN'T
BE...

"YOU STILL
DON'T
REMEMBER
FOR SURE
WHAT YOUR
OLD FACE
LOOKED
LIKE,
RIGHT?"

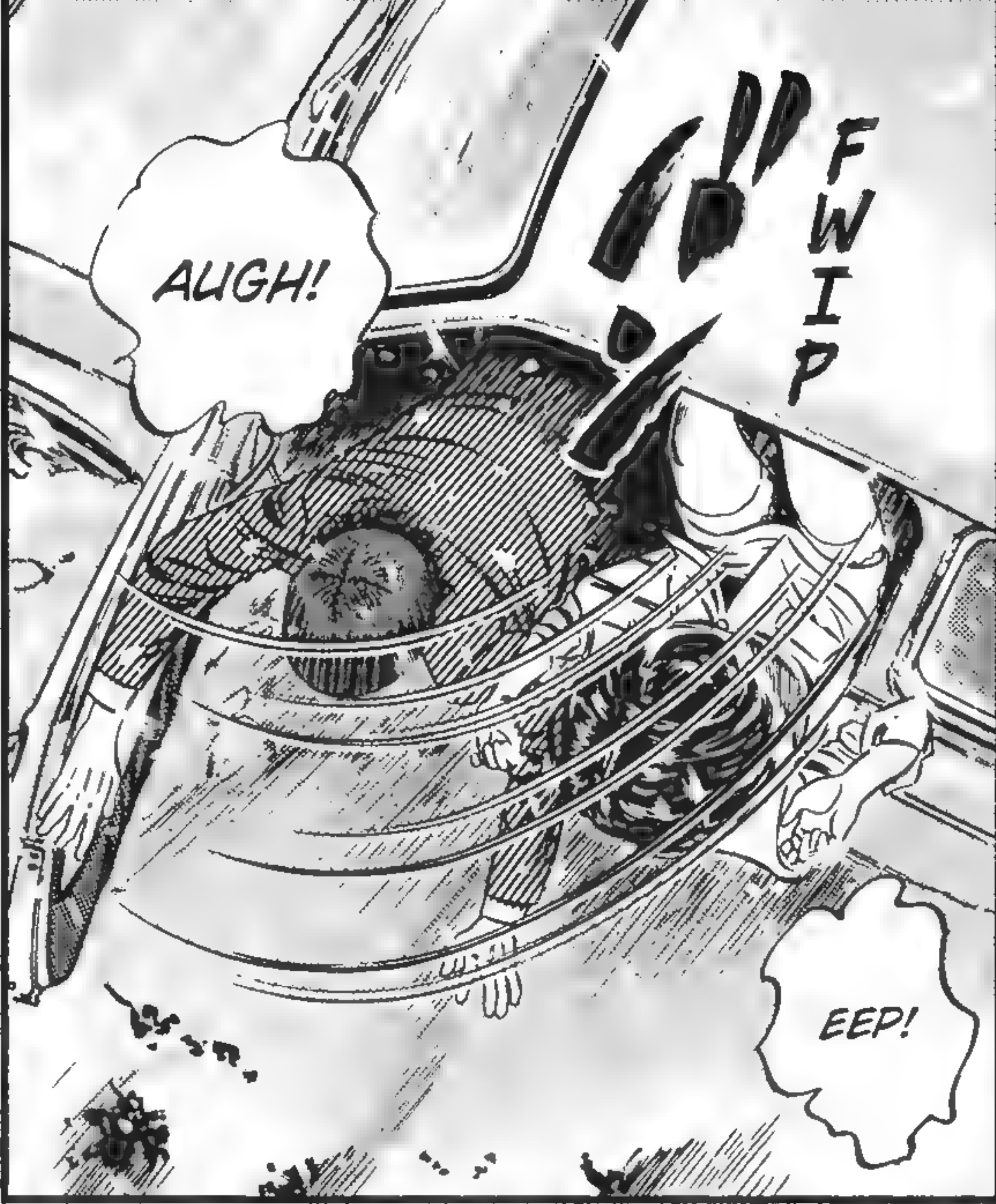


"I
MEAN..."

MY OLD
FACE
LOOKED
NOTHING
LIKE THIS.

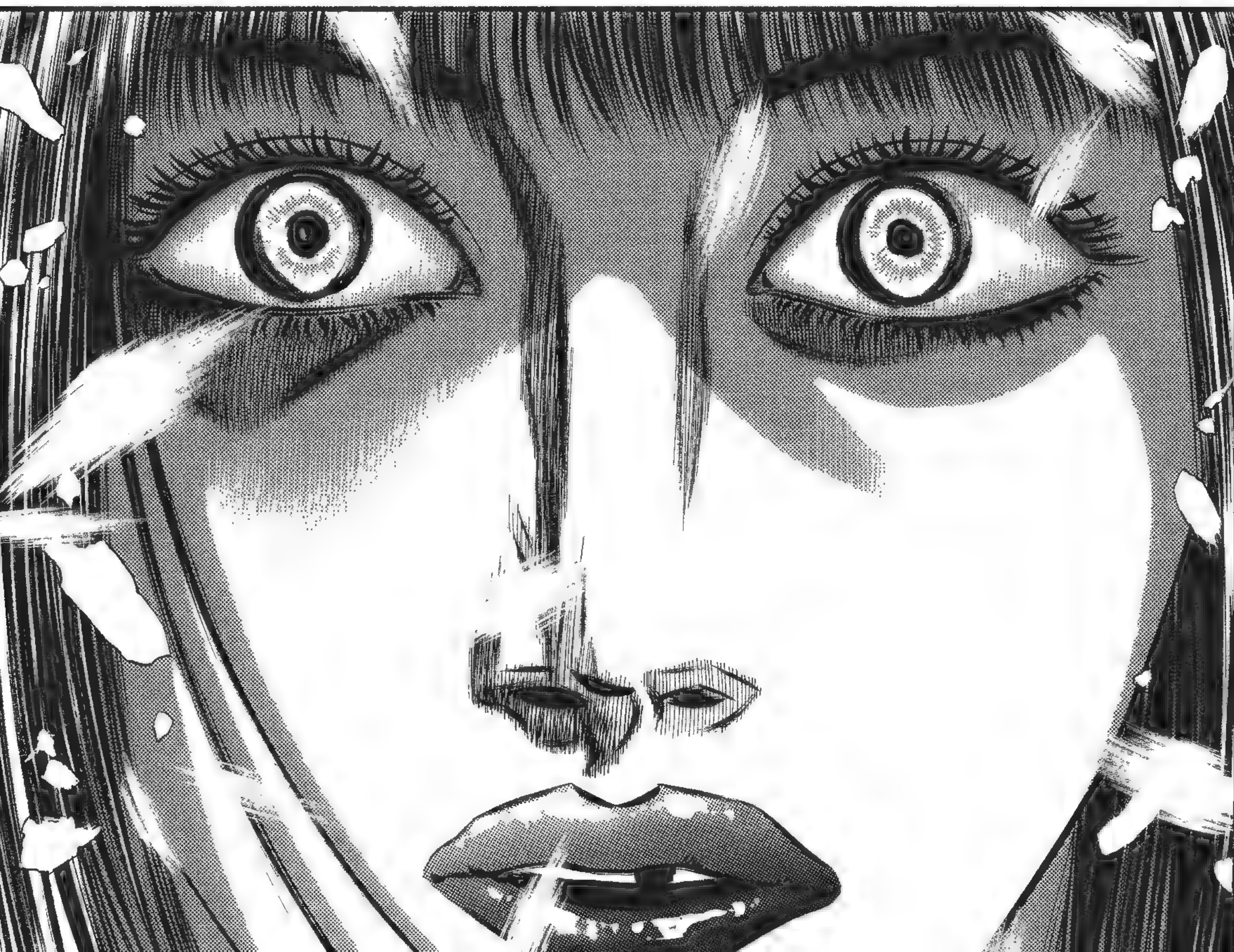
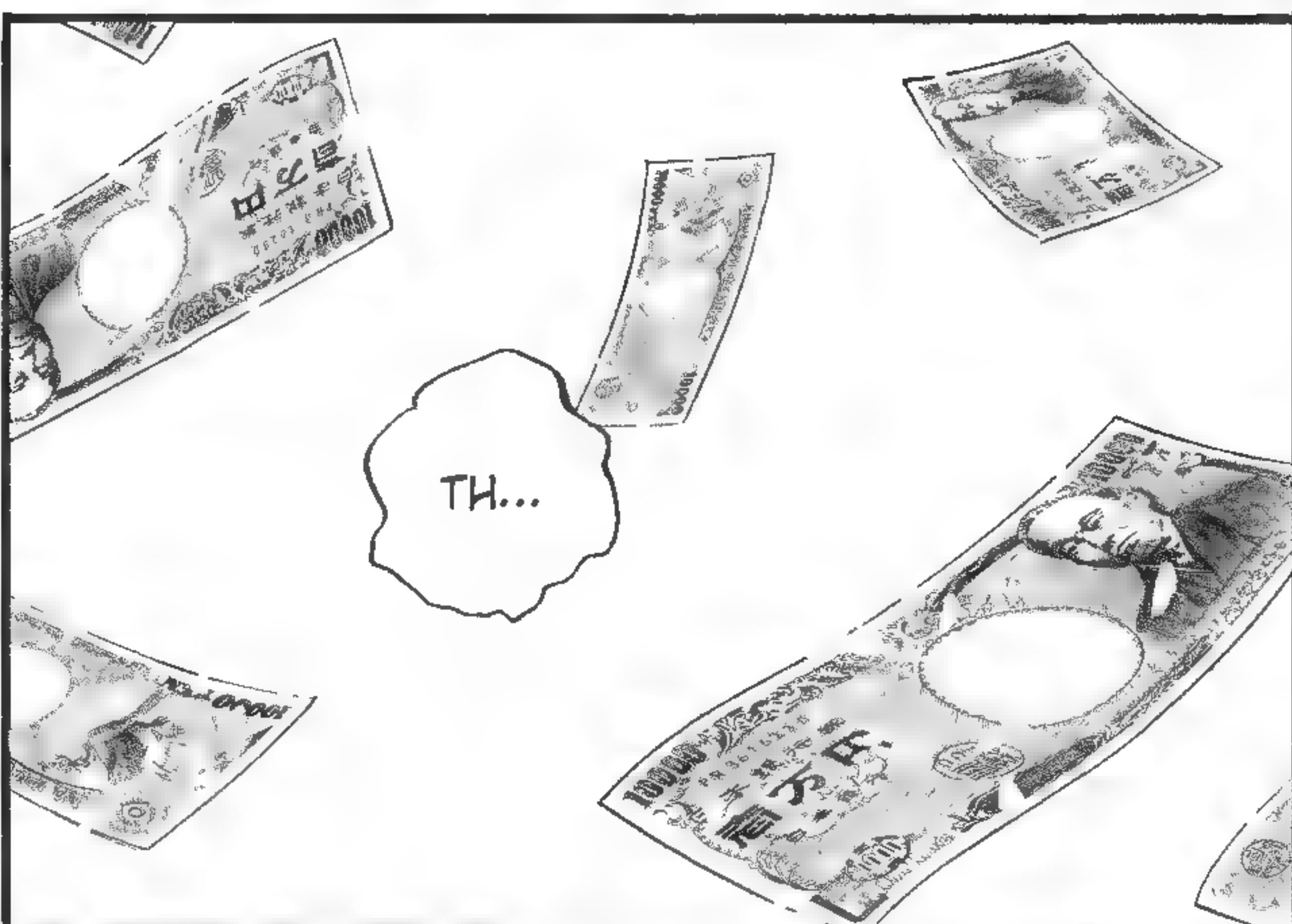
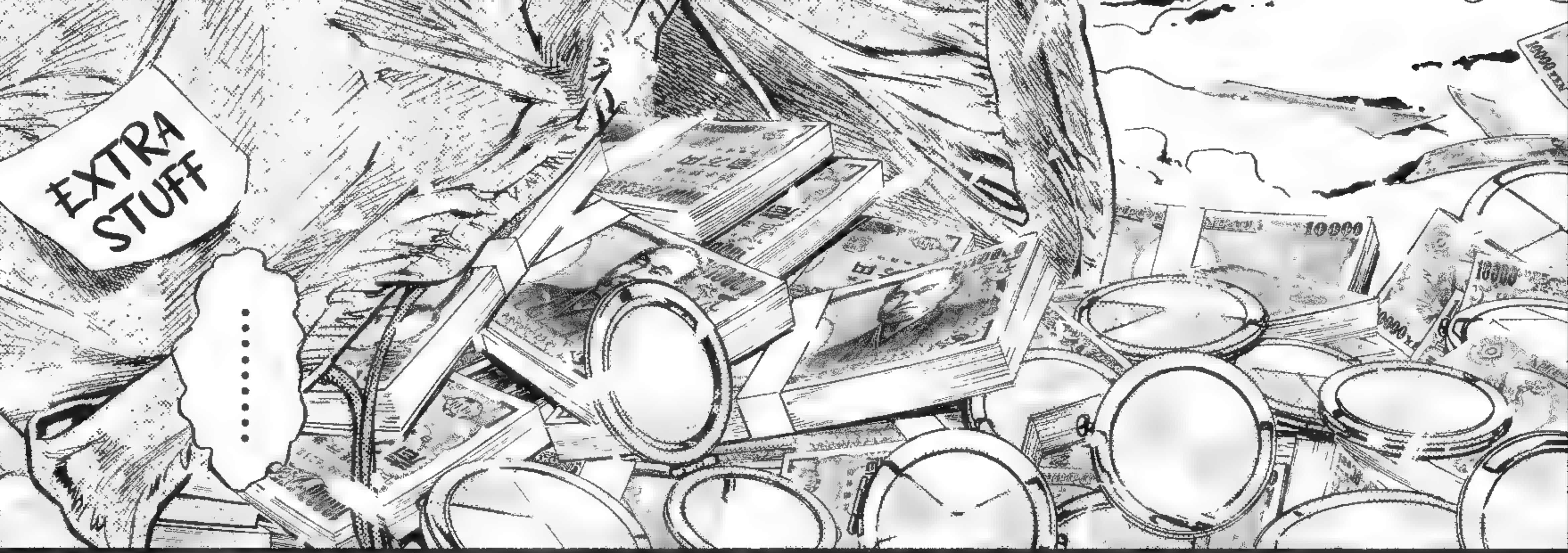
THERE'S
NO WAY.

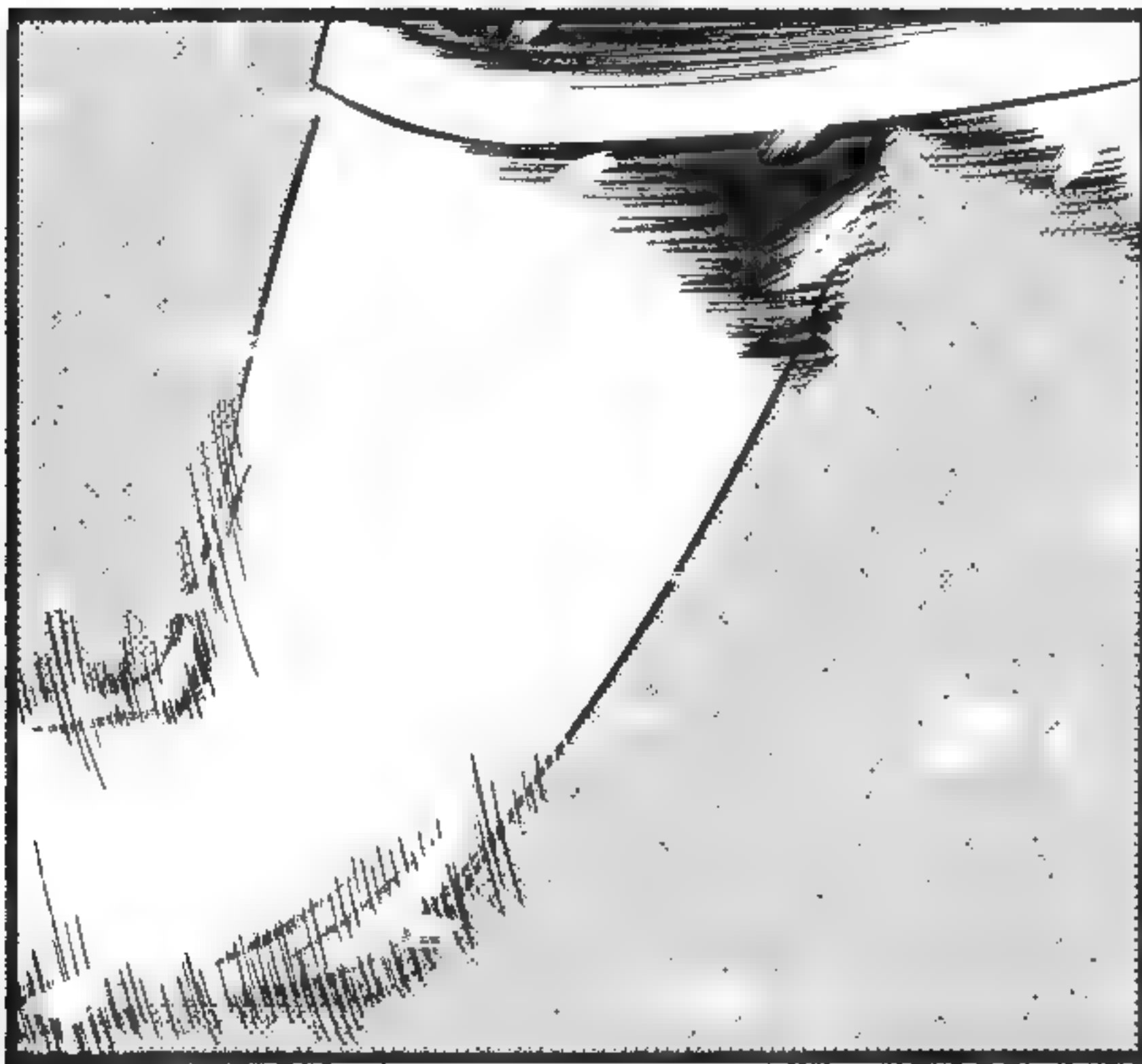
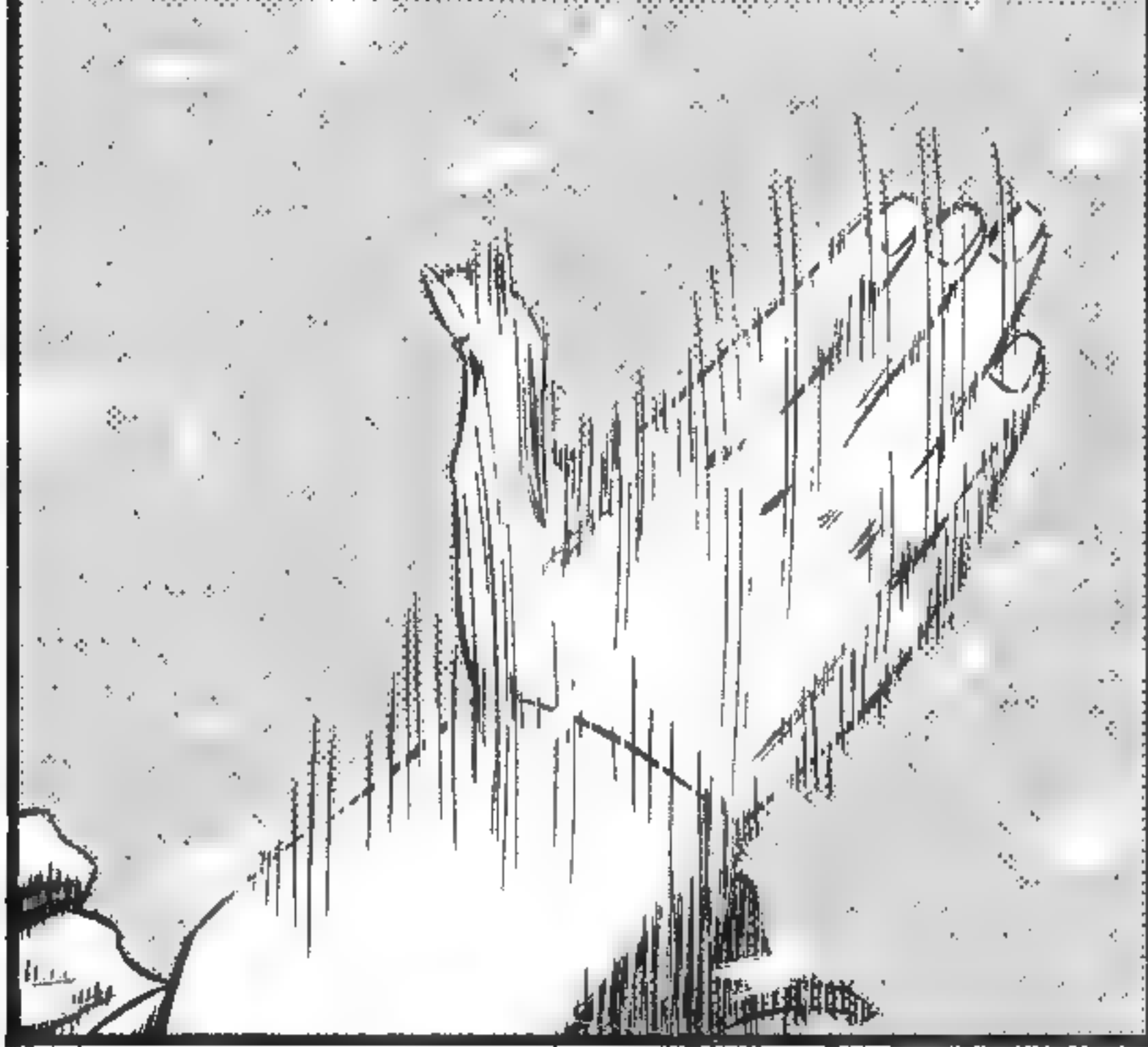


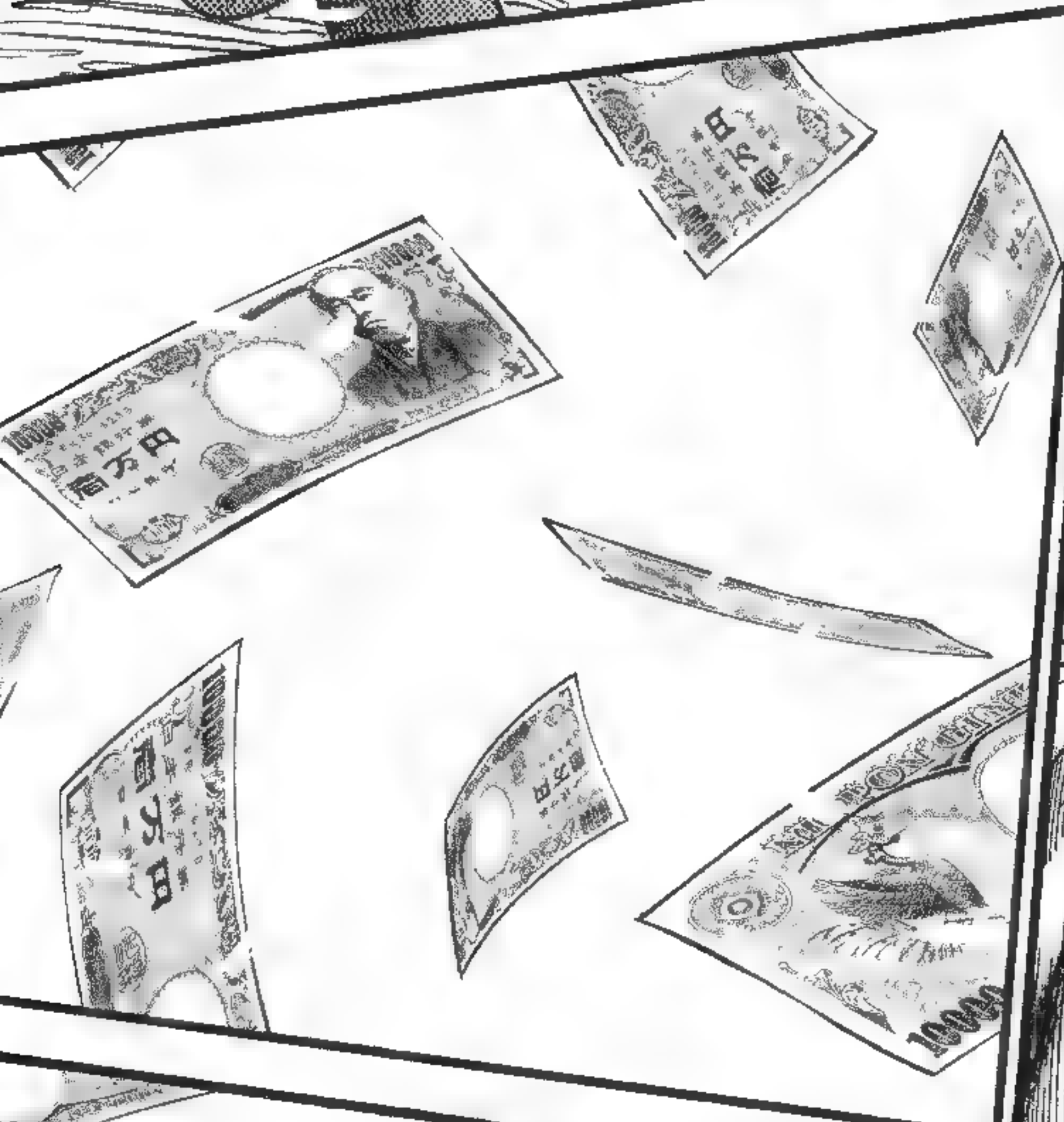






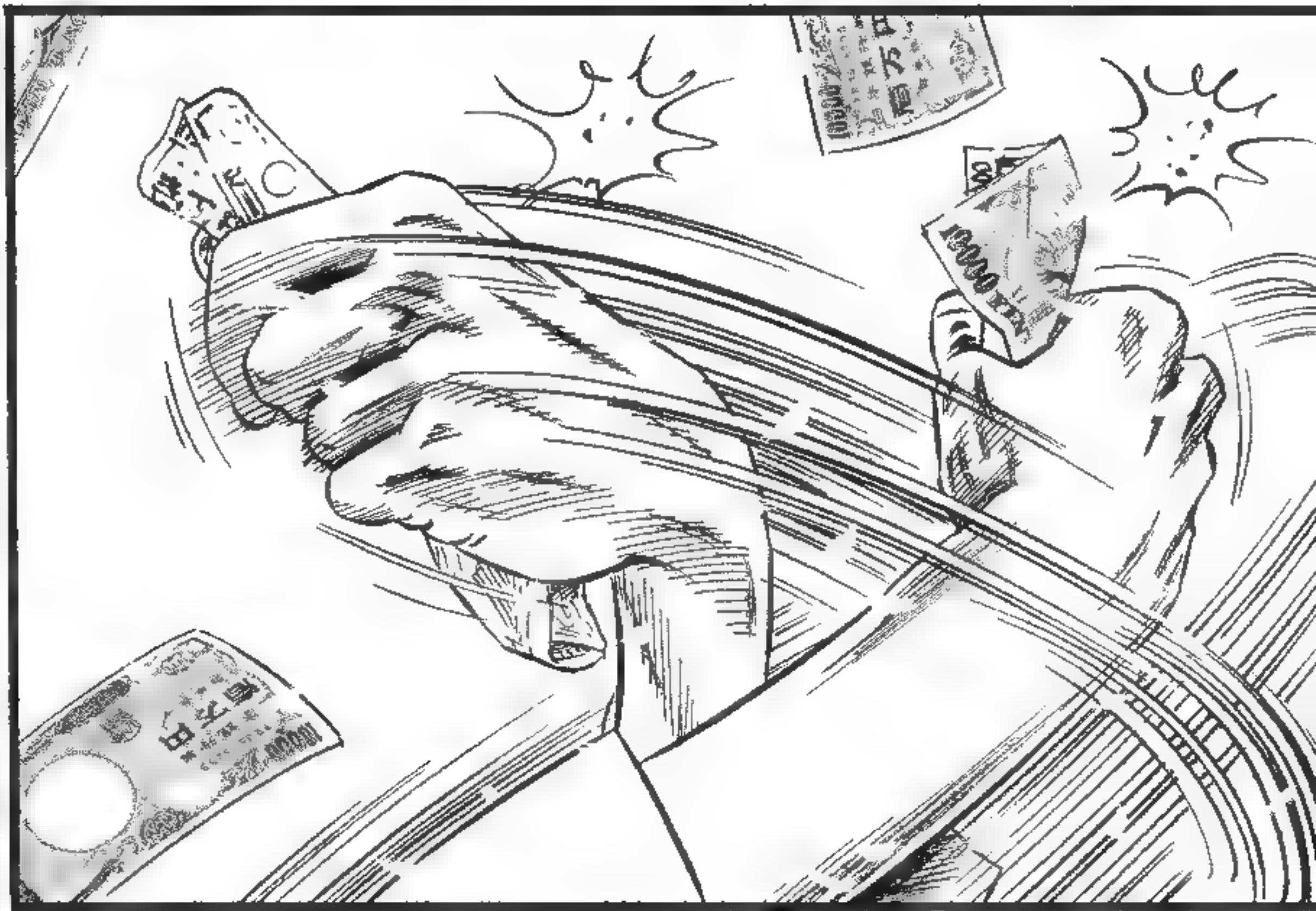
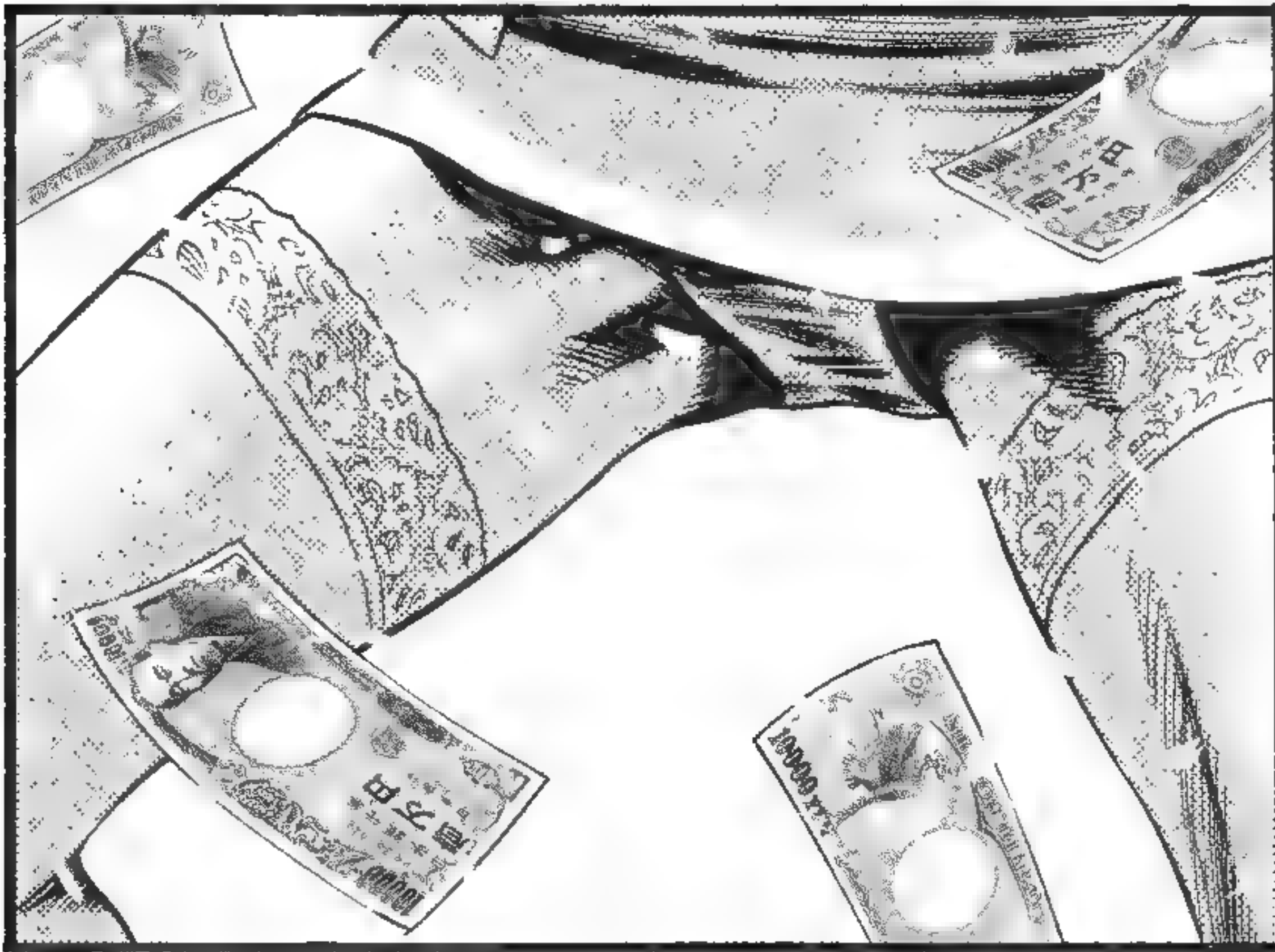
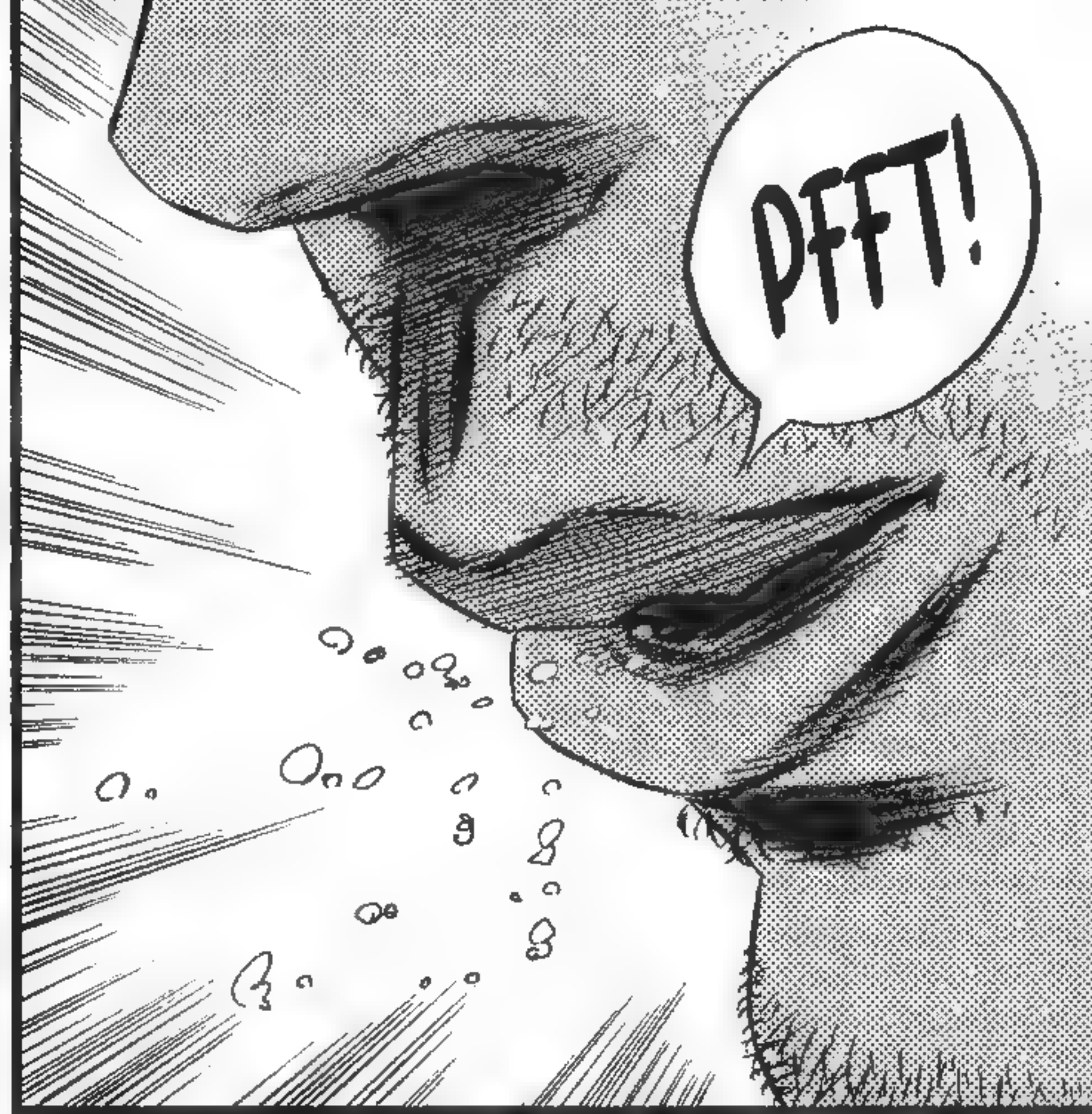






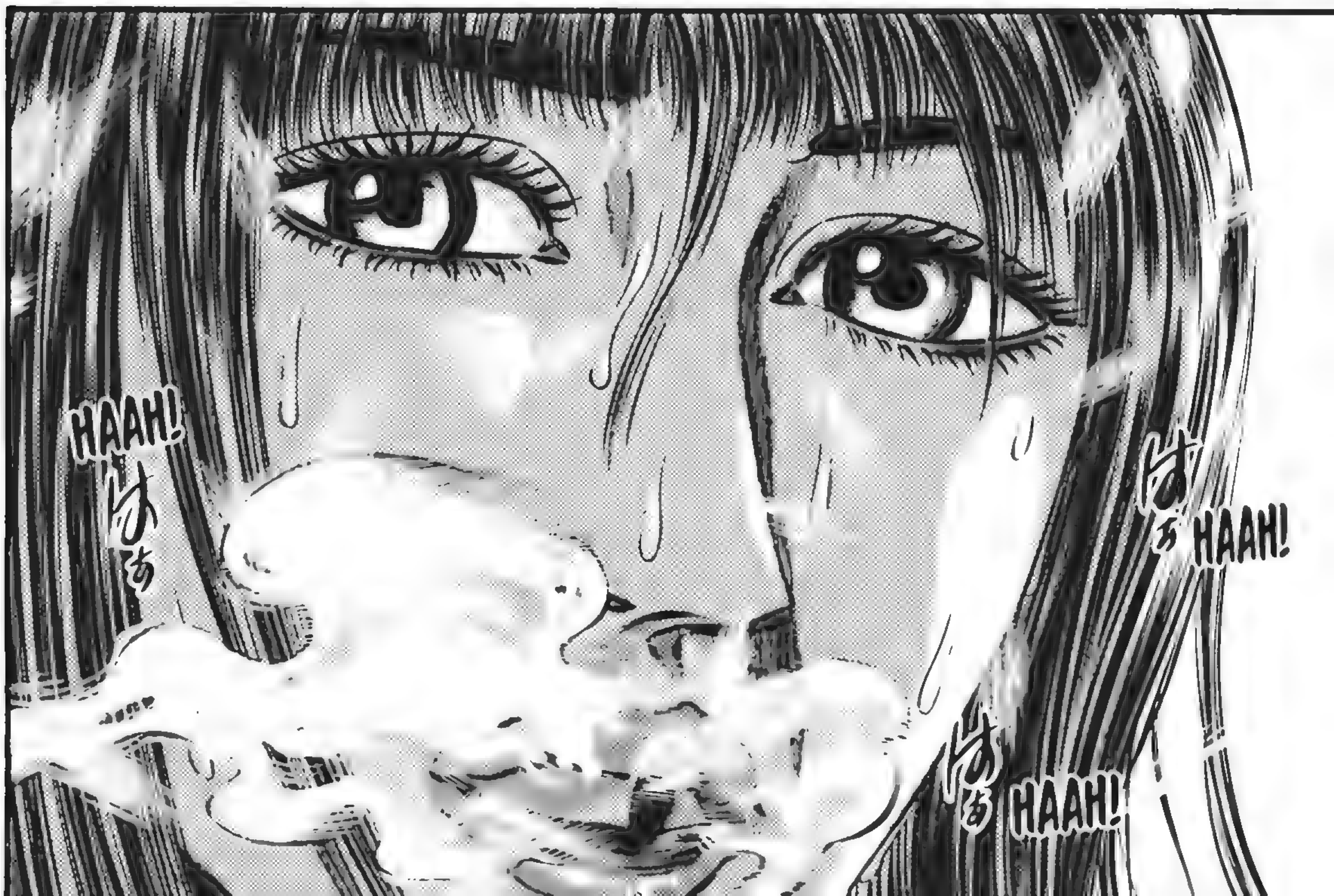








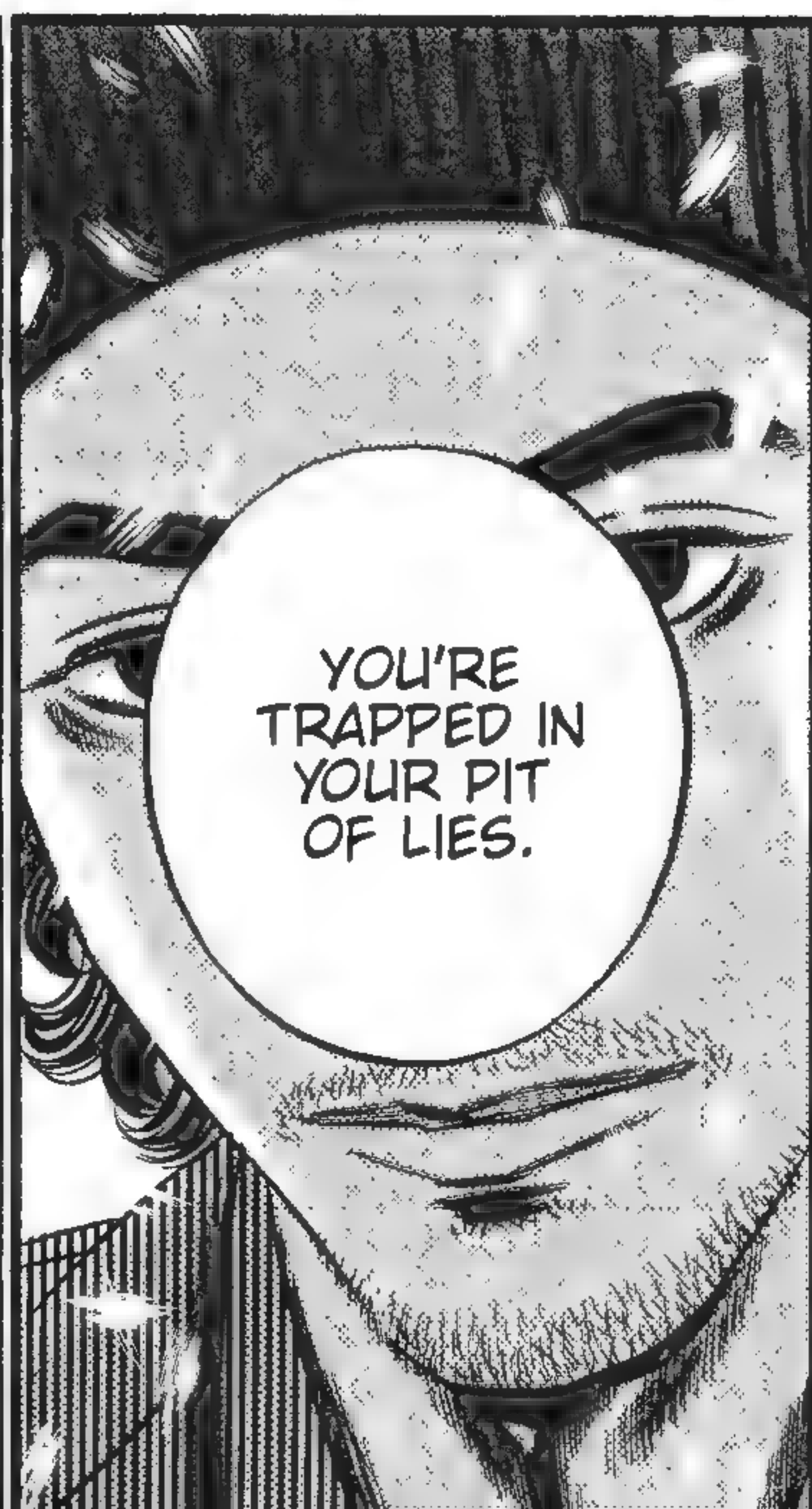
MONEY?
REALLY? SO
PREDICTABLE.



HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!









WOULD
YOU
SHUT
THE
FUCK
UP?!!





WHAT YOU
CAN SEE
WITH THE
EYE IS ALL
WE ARE!

DON'T YOU
GET IT?!
THERE'S NO
SUCH THING
AS A SOUL!



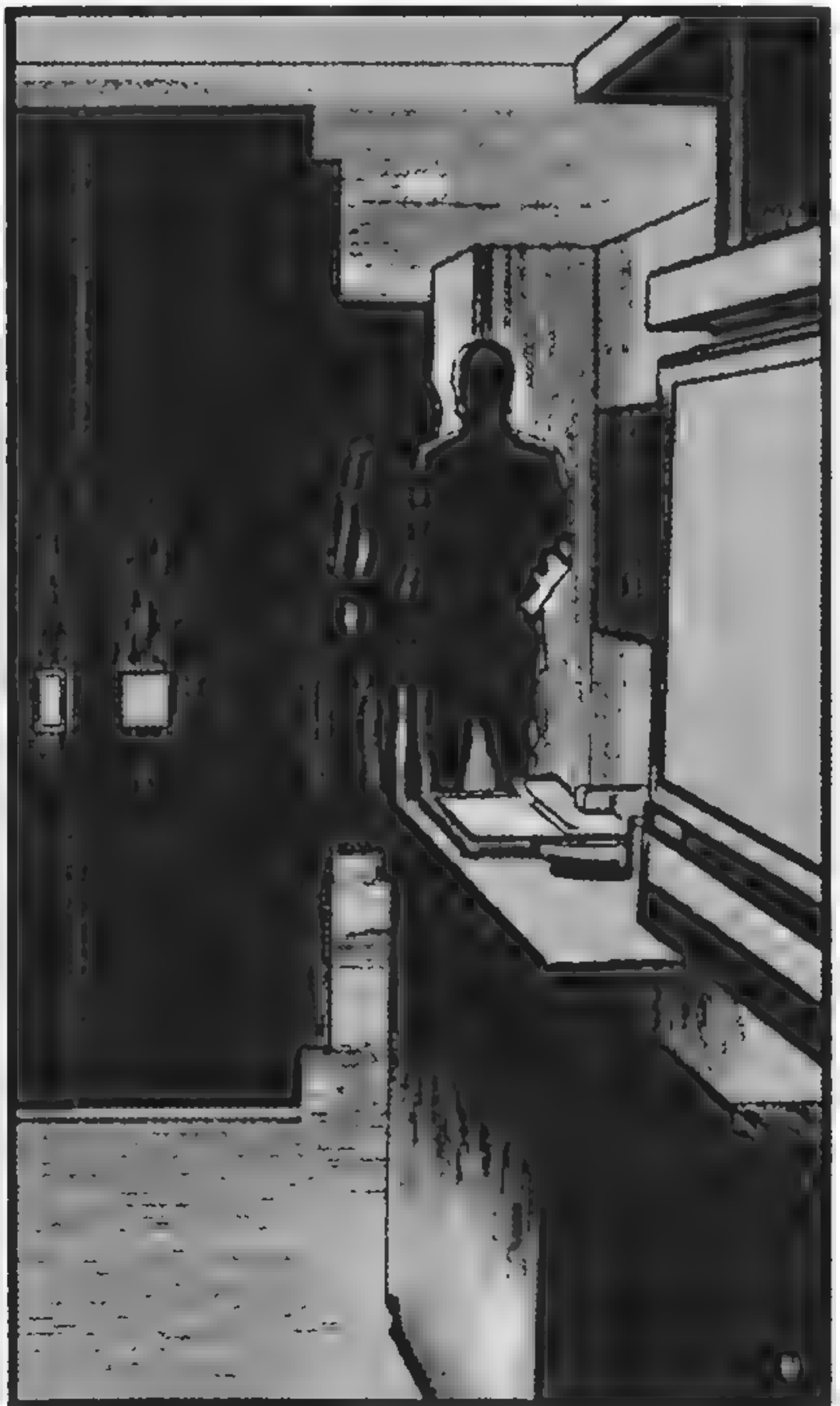
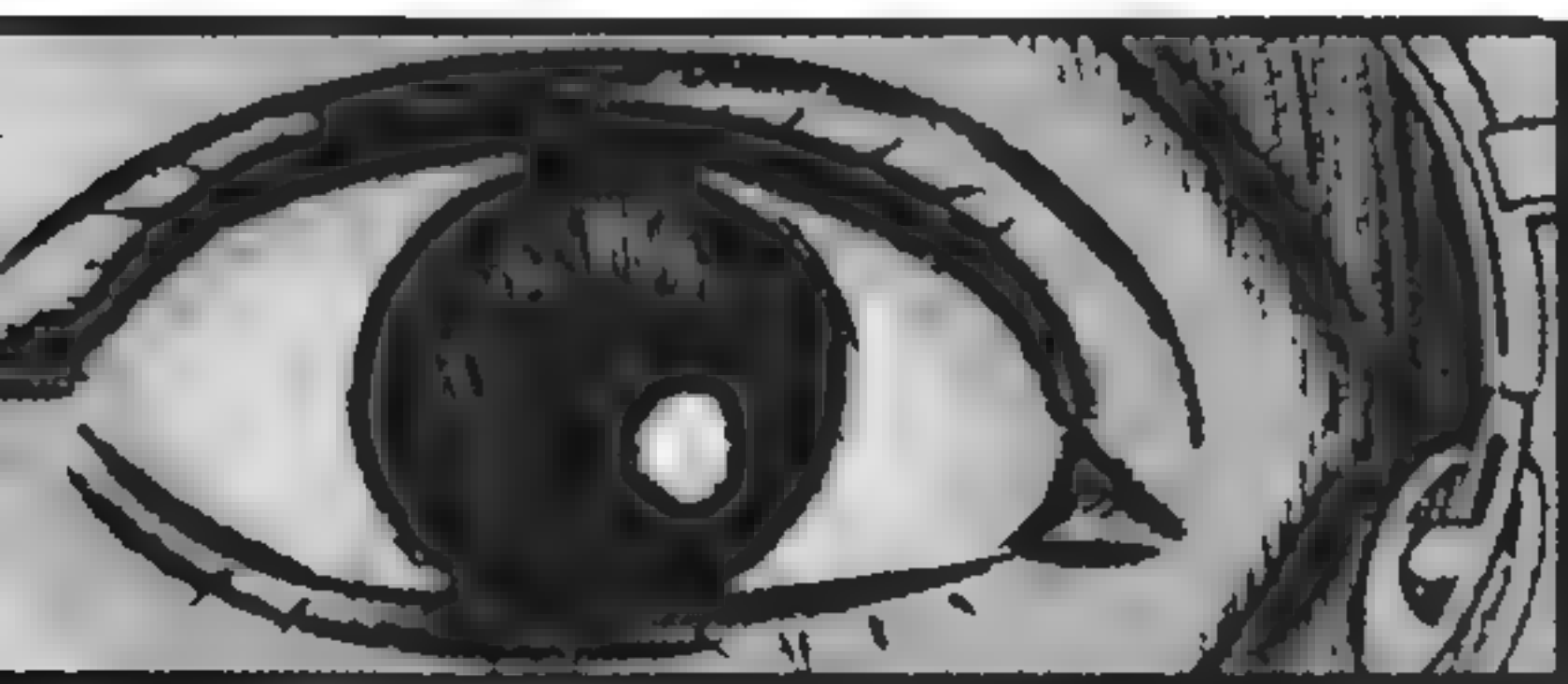
MY
FACE...

MY
BODY...

AND MY
HOLE!

THAT'S
ALL THEY
EVER
BOTHR
TO LOOK
AT!!

THAT'S
ALL MEN
HAVE EVER
WANTED
FROM ME!







WILLING
TO SEE
WHAT'S
INSIDE
ME.

THERE IS
NO ONE
IN THE
WORLD...





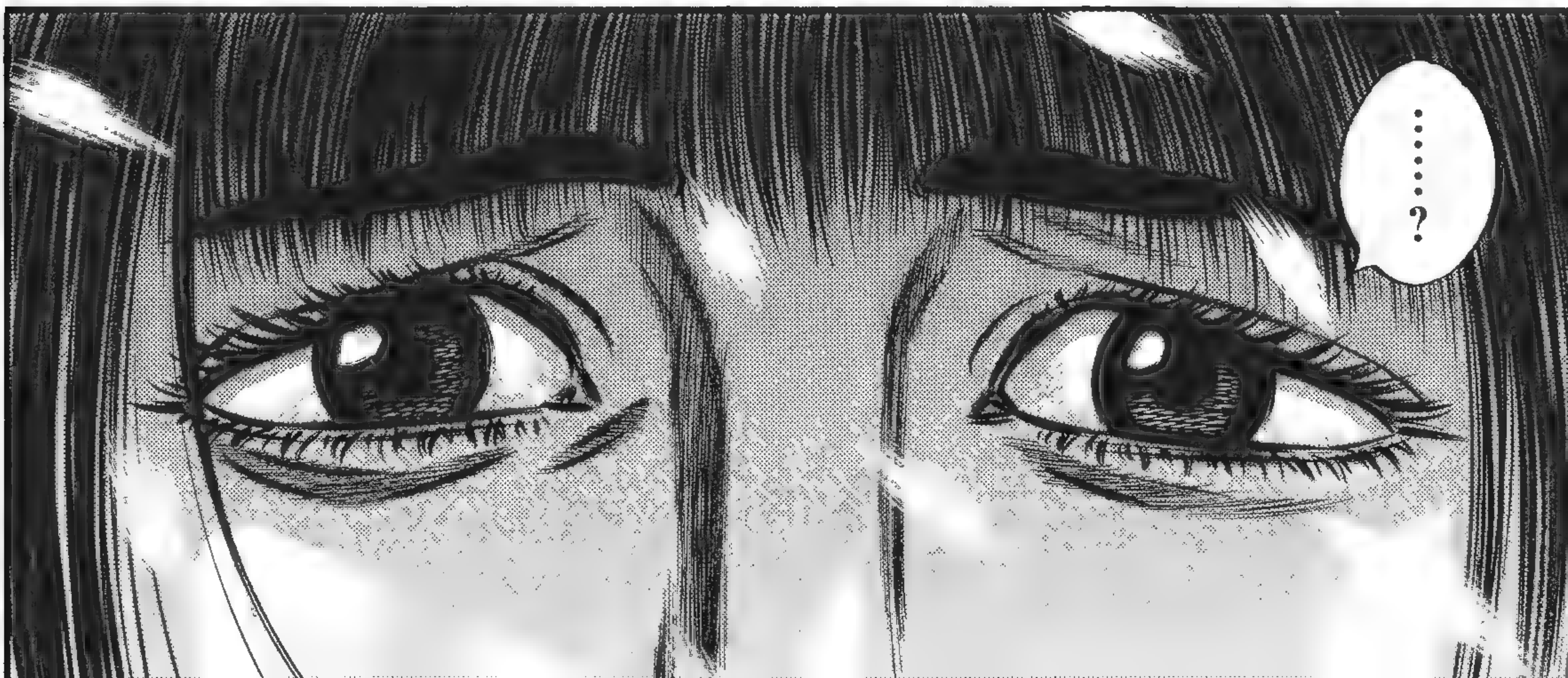
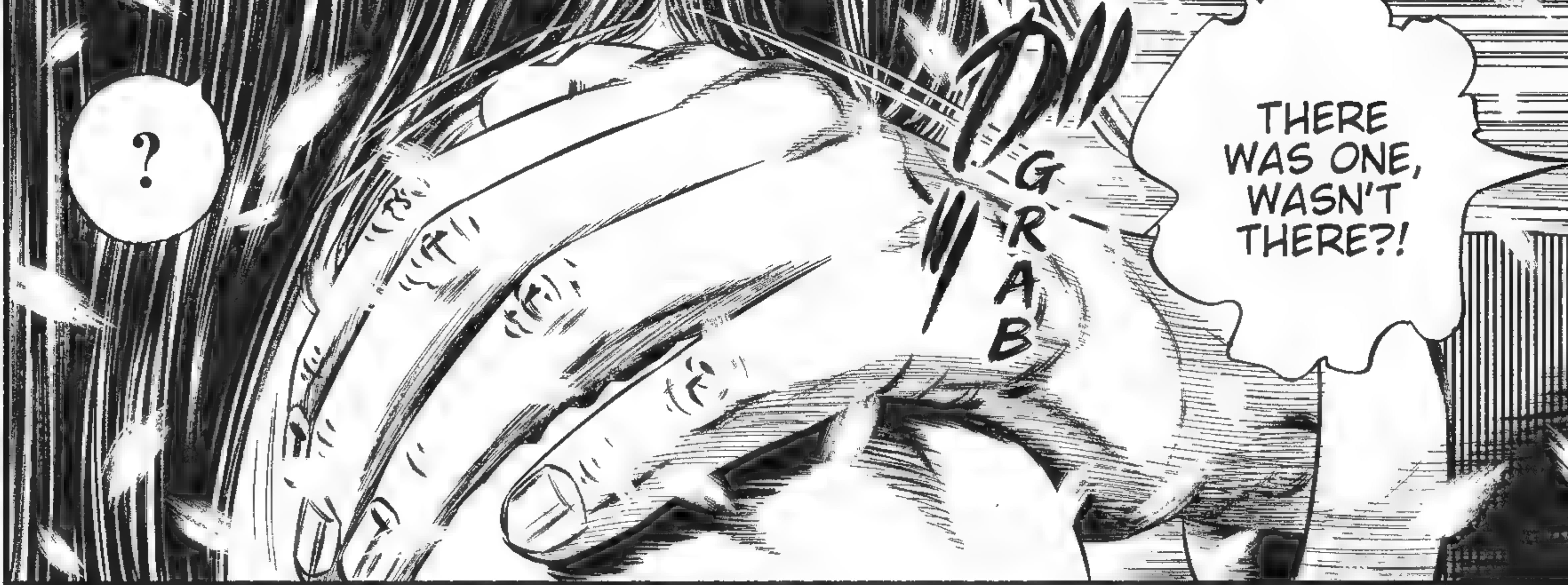
AND THAT'S
ALL I CAN
SEE TOO!
FACES,
MONEY, AND
MATERIAL
CRAP!!





THAT'S
A LIE!!







AND DIRTY
TEETH...
RIGHT?



DROOPING
EYES...



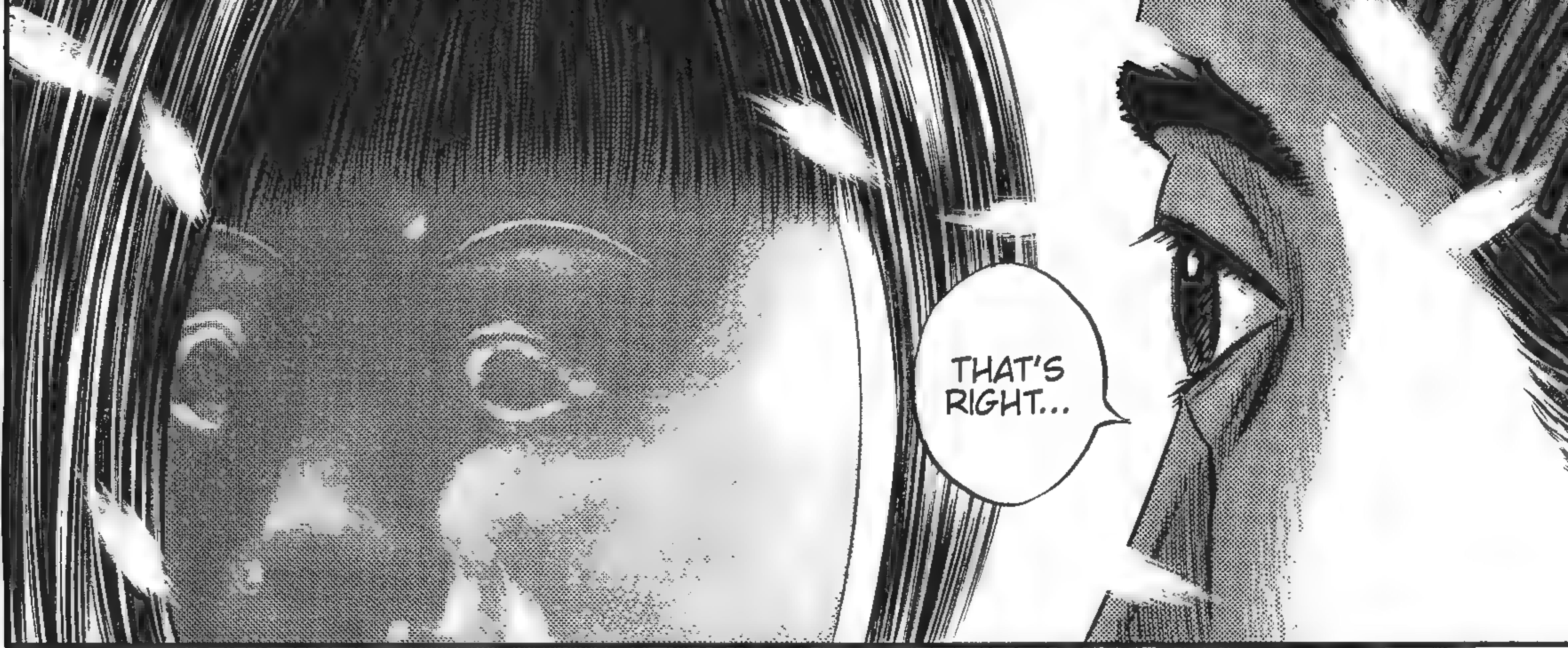
HE HAD
A PIG
NOSE...



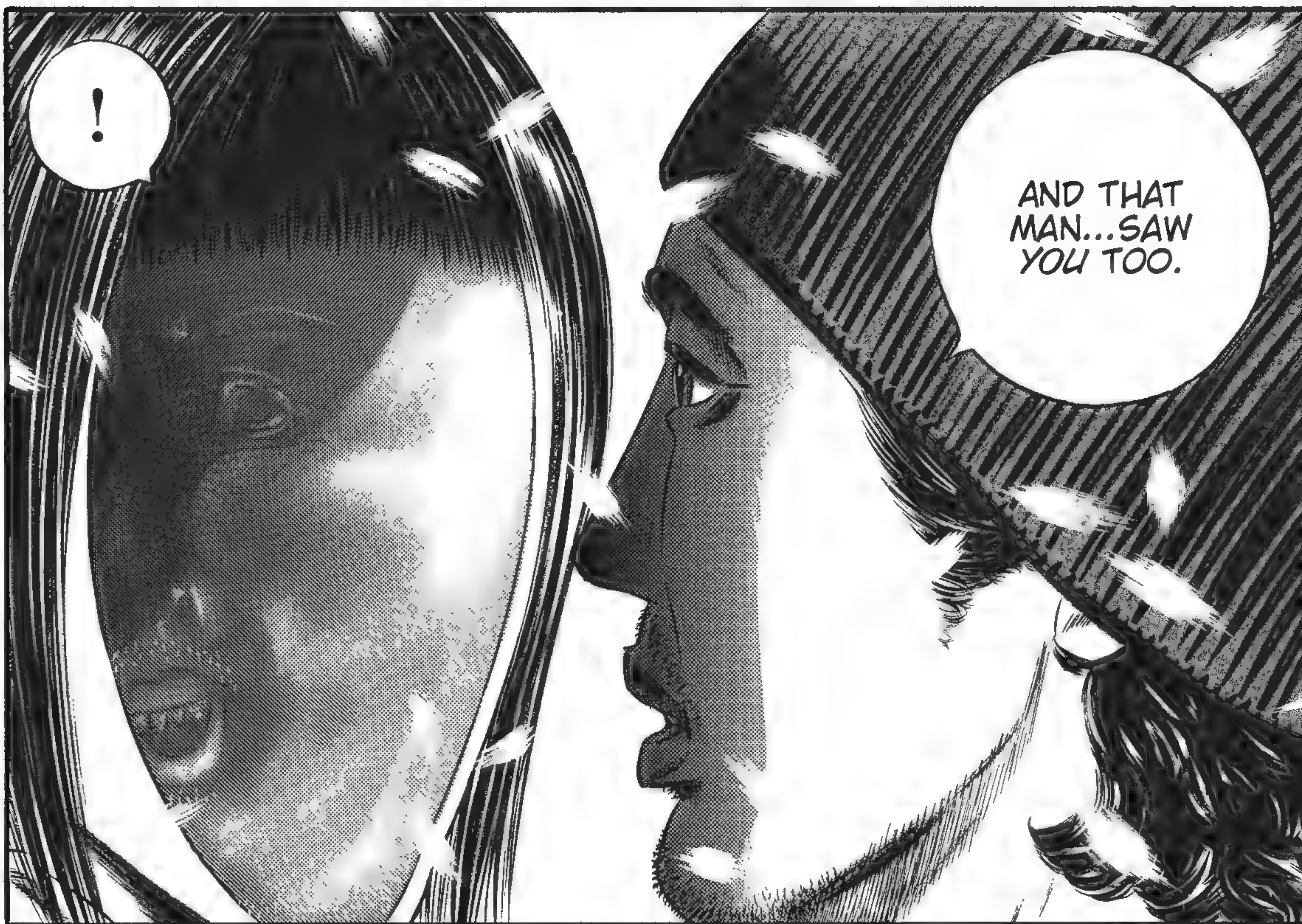
FOR WHAT
YOU SAW
INSIDE
HIM!



BUT YOU
DIDN'T GIVE
A CRAP HOW
UGLY HE WAS.
YOU LOVED
THAT MAN...

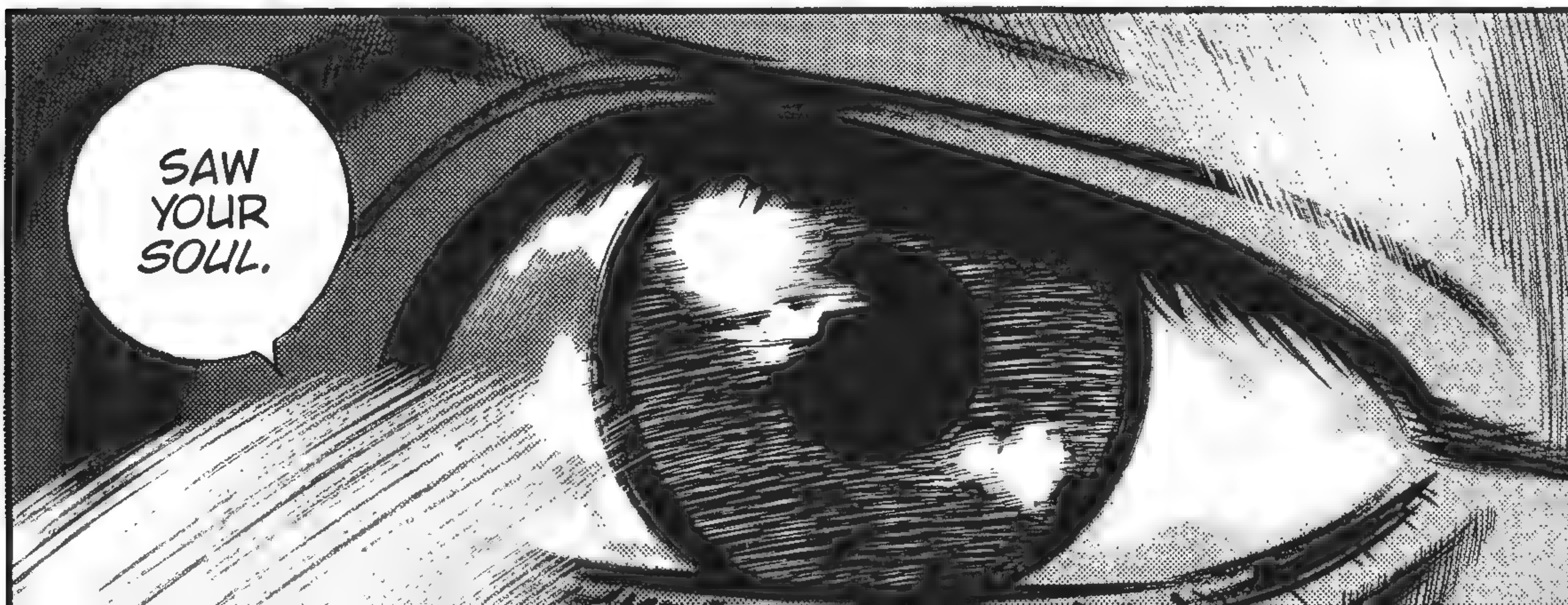


THAT'S
RIGHT...



!

AND THAT
MAN...SAW
YOU TOO.



SAW
YOUR
SOUL.





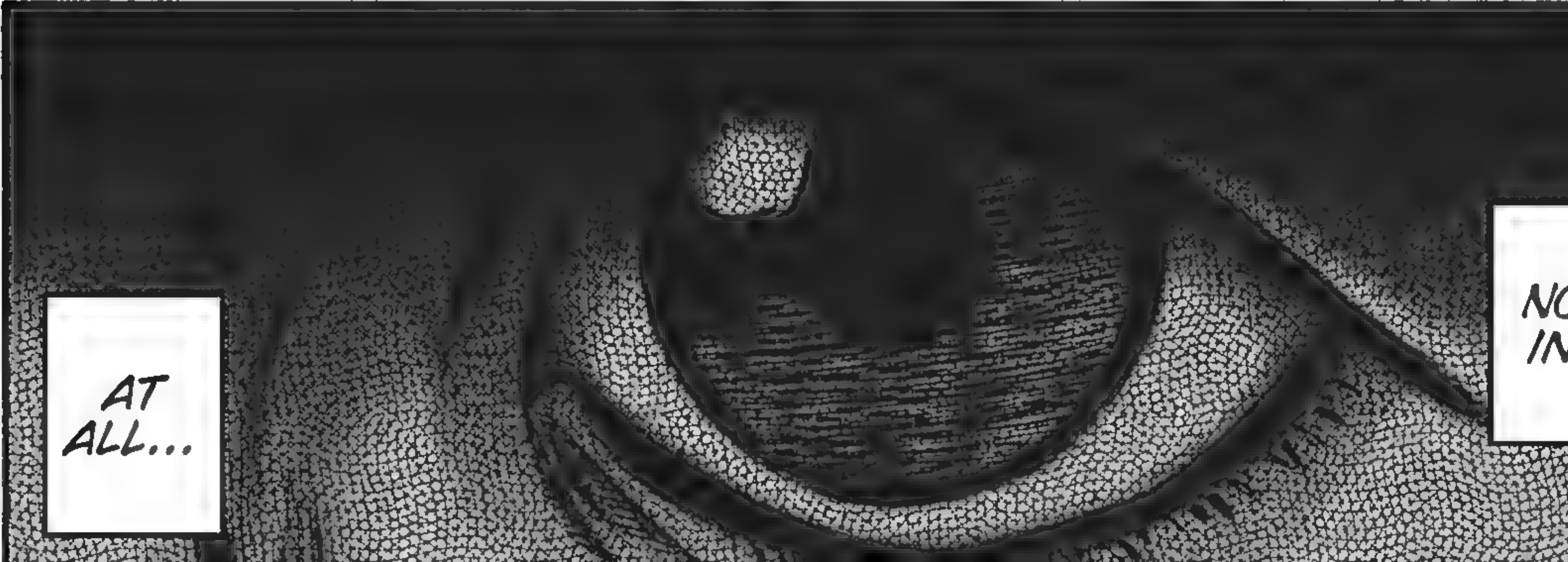
UGLY.

WALKING
WITH MY
EYES ON
MY OWN
FEET.

FACE
TO THE
FLOOR.



DAYS
WHERE
I HAD
NOTHING
AT ALL.



AT
ALL...

NOTH-
ING...



ONLY
YOU
SAW
ME.



BACK
THEN
...



AND
LOOK AT
ME. TO
MAKE ME
LIFT MY
HEAD.



YOU
DID YOUR
BEST TO
ENTER MY
GAZE...



EVEN
WITH MY
EYES SO
LOW...



YOU
EVEN
DREW A
PICTURE
OF THE
TRUE
ME.



OF MY
SOUL.



BUT
THAT
MOVED
ME
DEEPLY.

I'D
ALWAYS
ASSUMED
THE
WHOLE
WORLD
WAS
SHALLOW
...



HAD A
TALENT
FOR
SEEING!



YOU WERE
THE ONLY
PERSON I'D
EVER MET
WHO SAW
BEYOND THE
PHYSICAL.

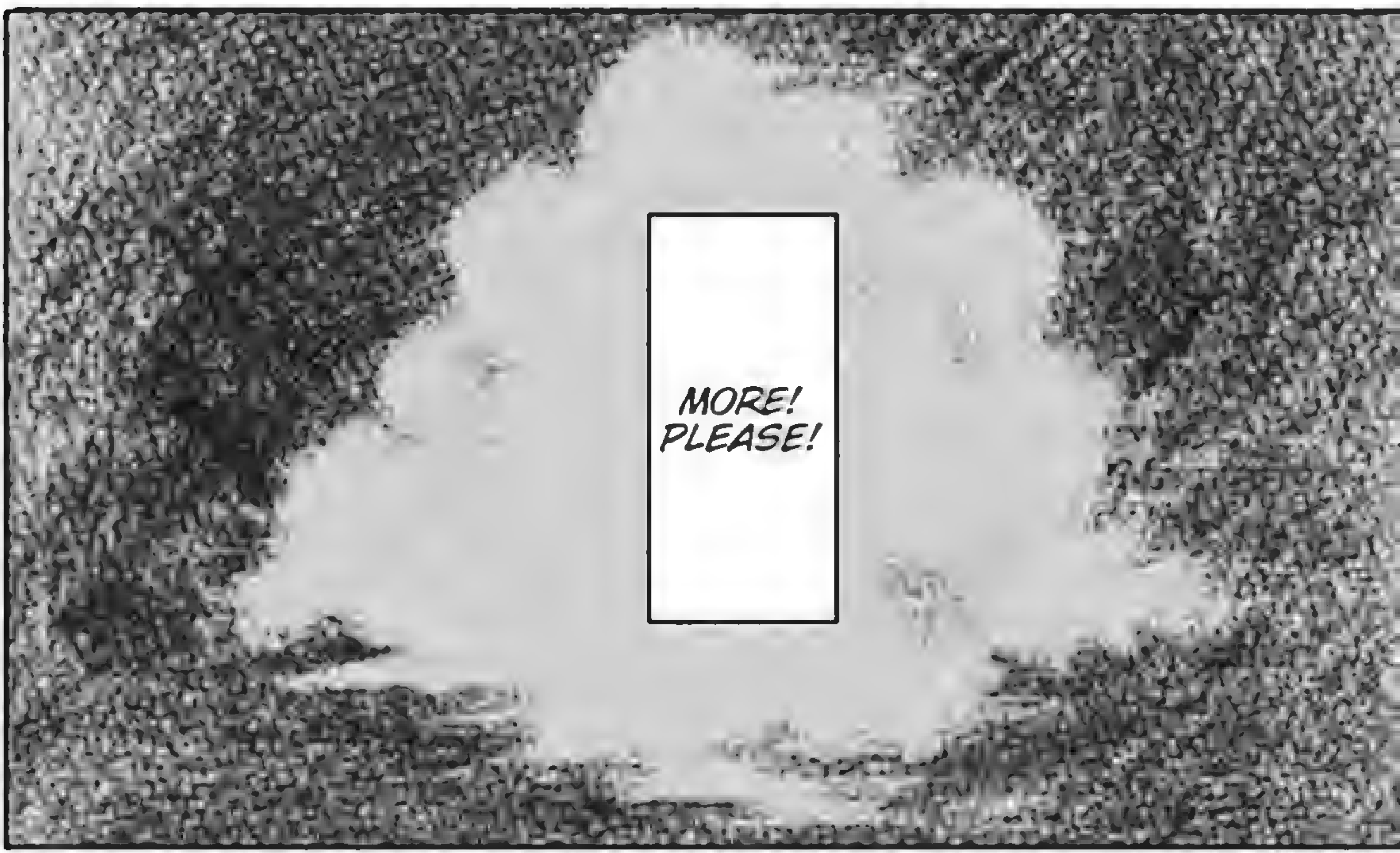
YOU...



LOOK AT
ME!



PLEASE
...
LOOK
AT ME.



MORE!
PLEASE!



THE
HIGHER
I WAS
ABLE TO
RAISE MY
HEAD...



AND
THE
MORE
SHE
LOOKED
AT ME
...



AND
FACE
THE
WORLD
IN
FRONT
OF ME.



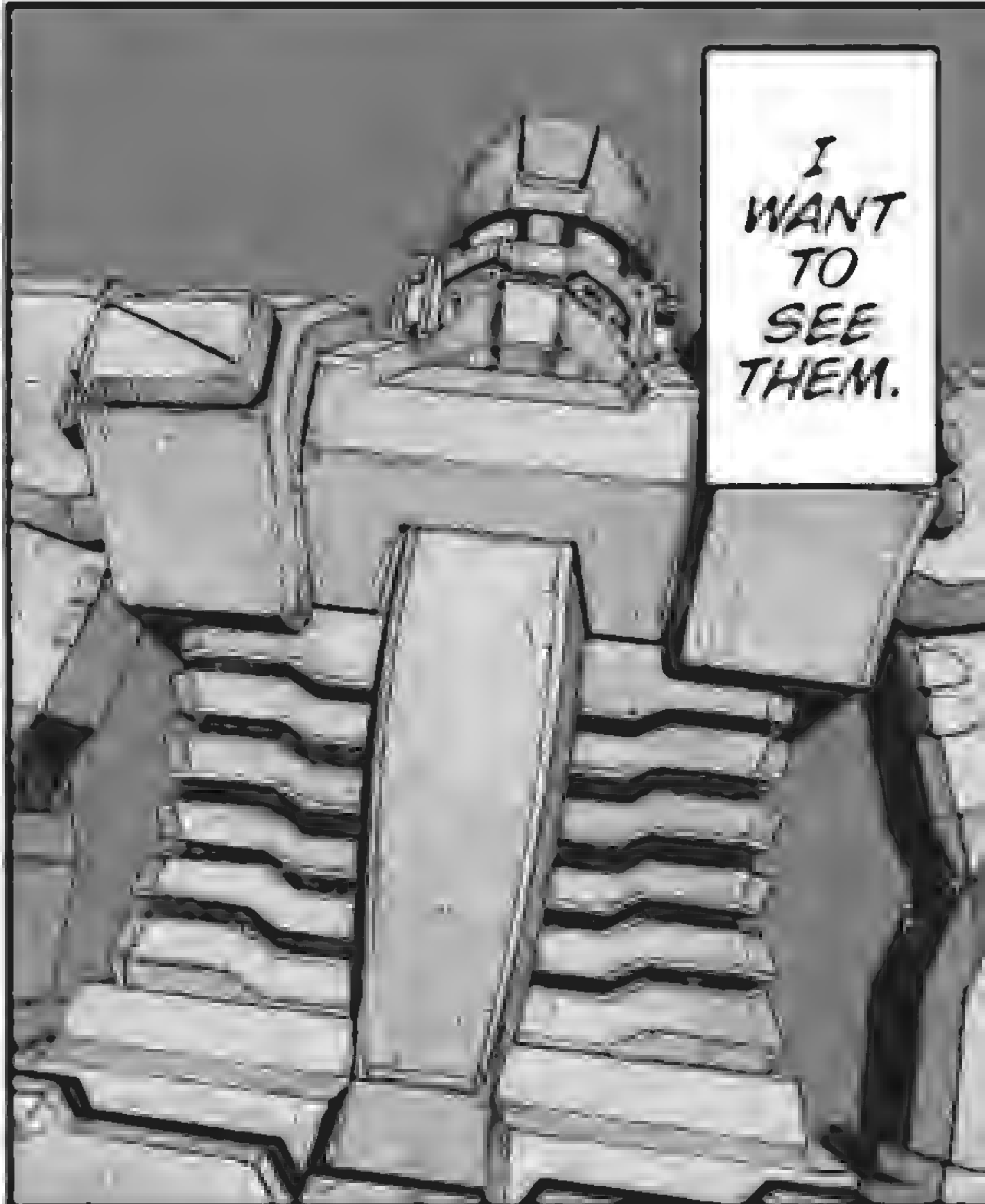
AND, FOR
THE FIRST
TIME EVER,
I GAINED
THE
COURAGE
TO LOOK
AT
OTHERS
TOO.



I
LEARNED
HOW TO
FACE
PEOPLE.



I
WANT
TO!



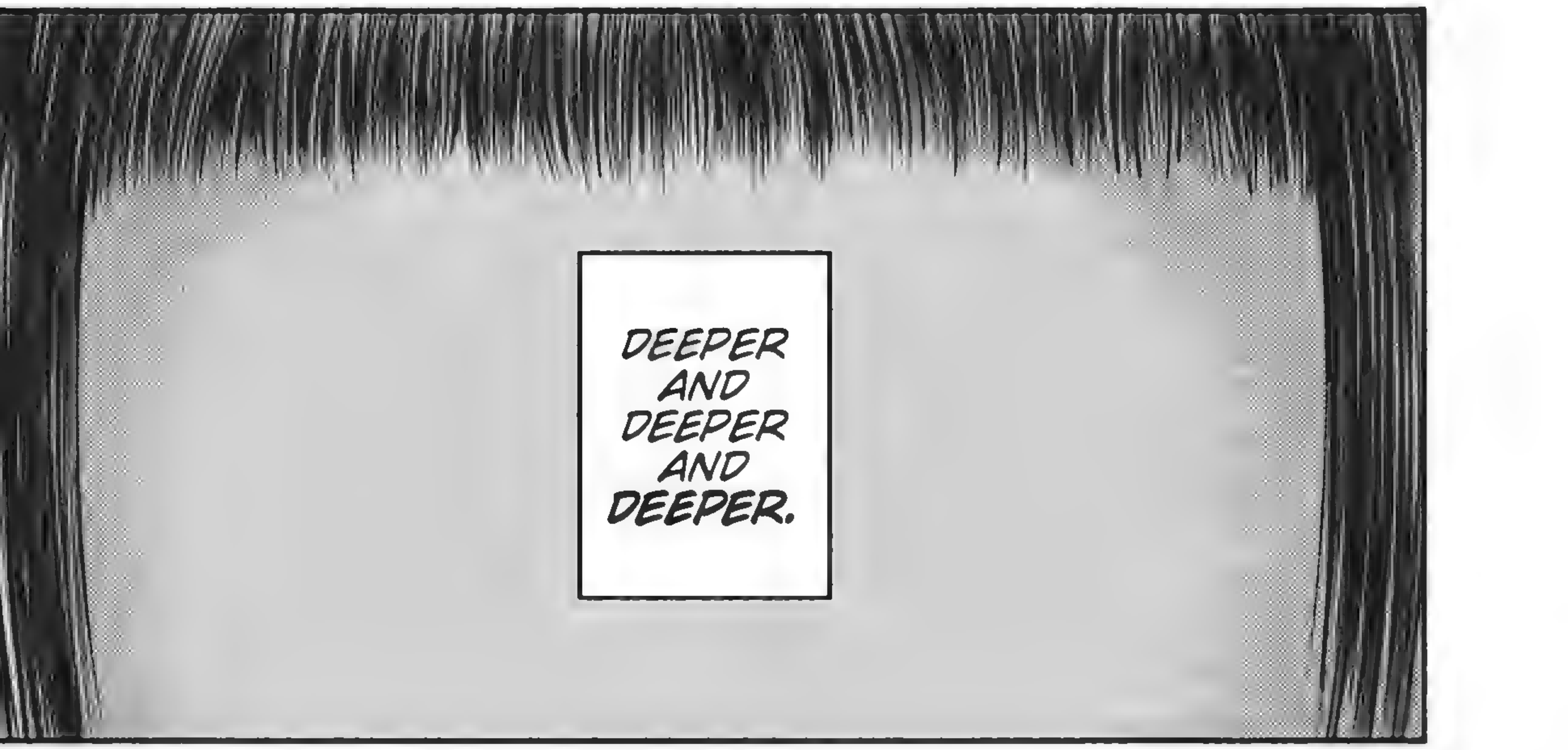
I
WANT
TO
SEE
THEM.



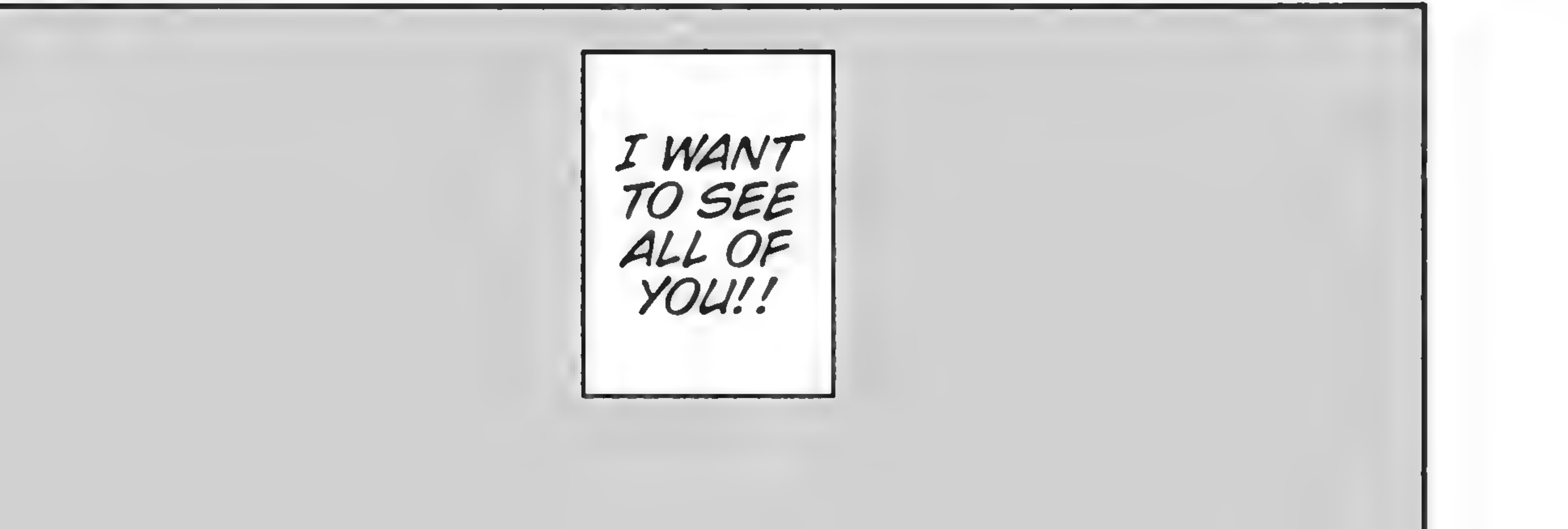
I WANT
TO SEE
MORE
AND
MORE OF
THEM!



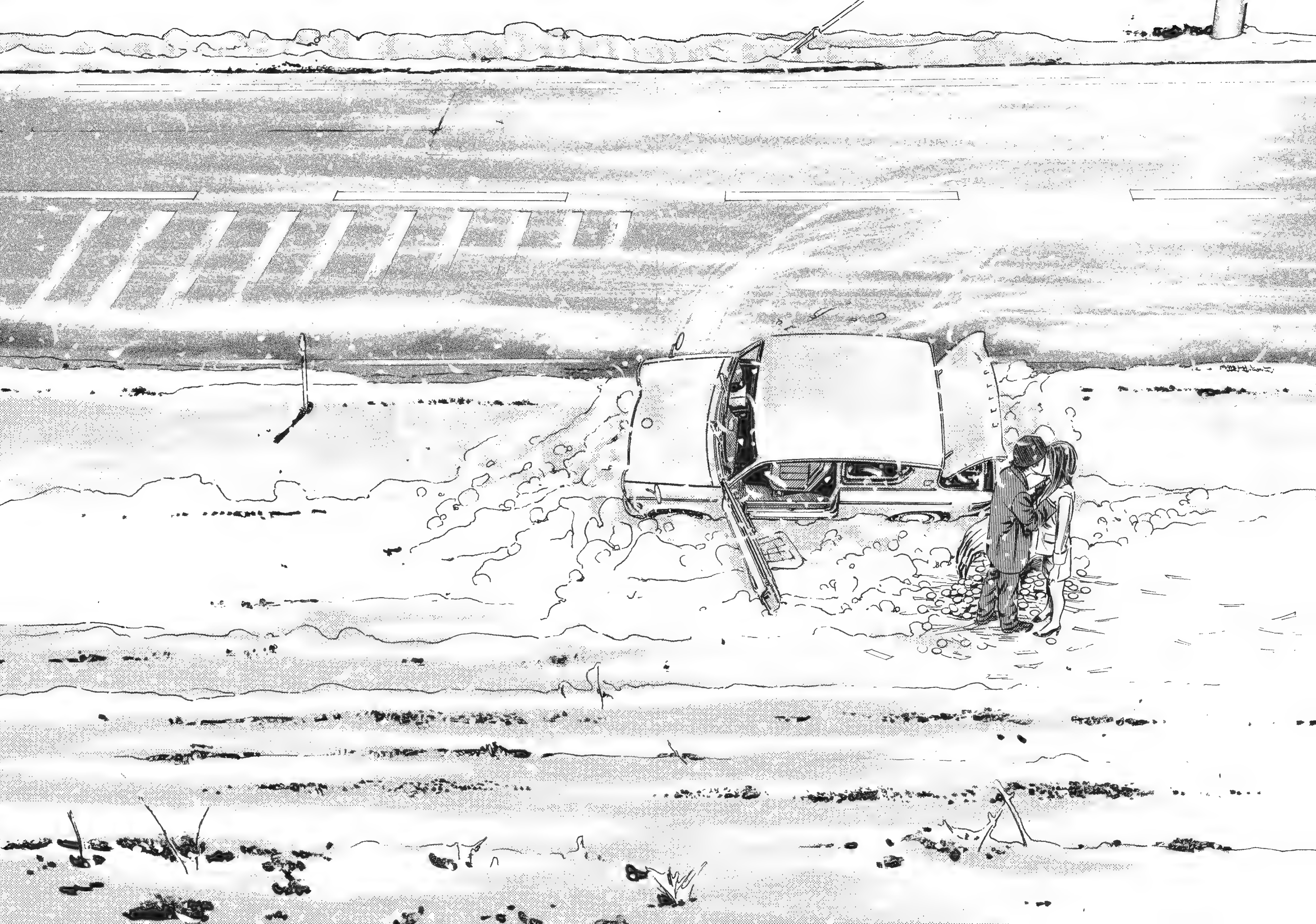
I WANT
TO
LOOK AT
YOU...

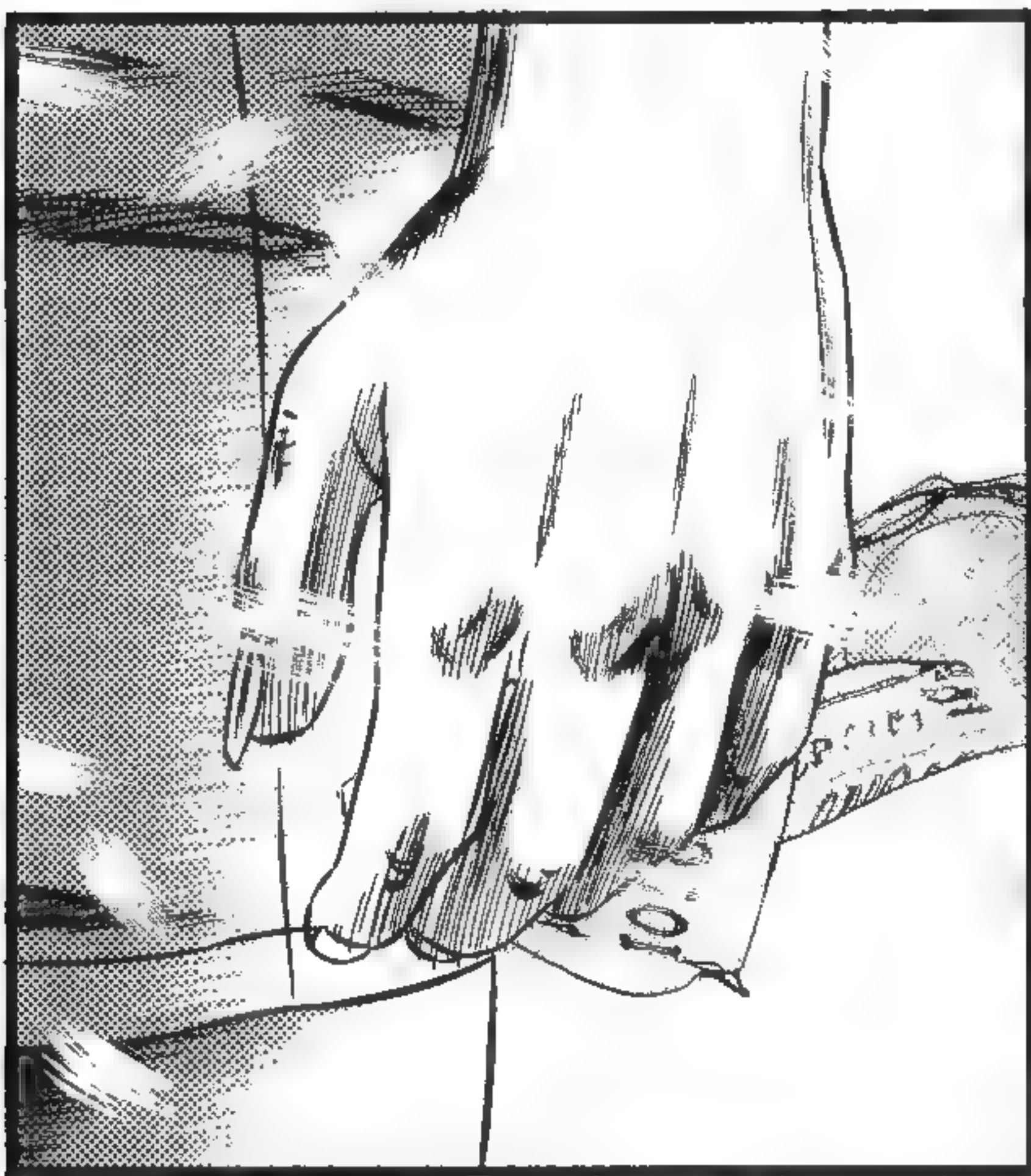
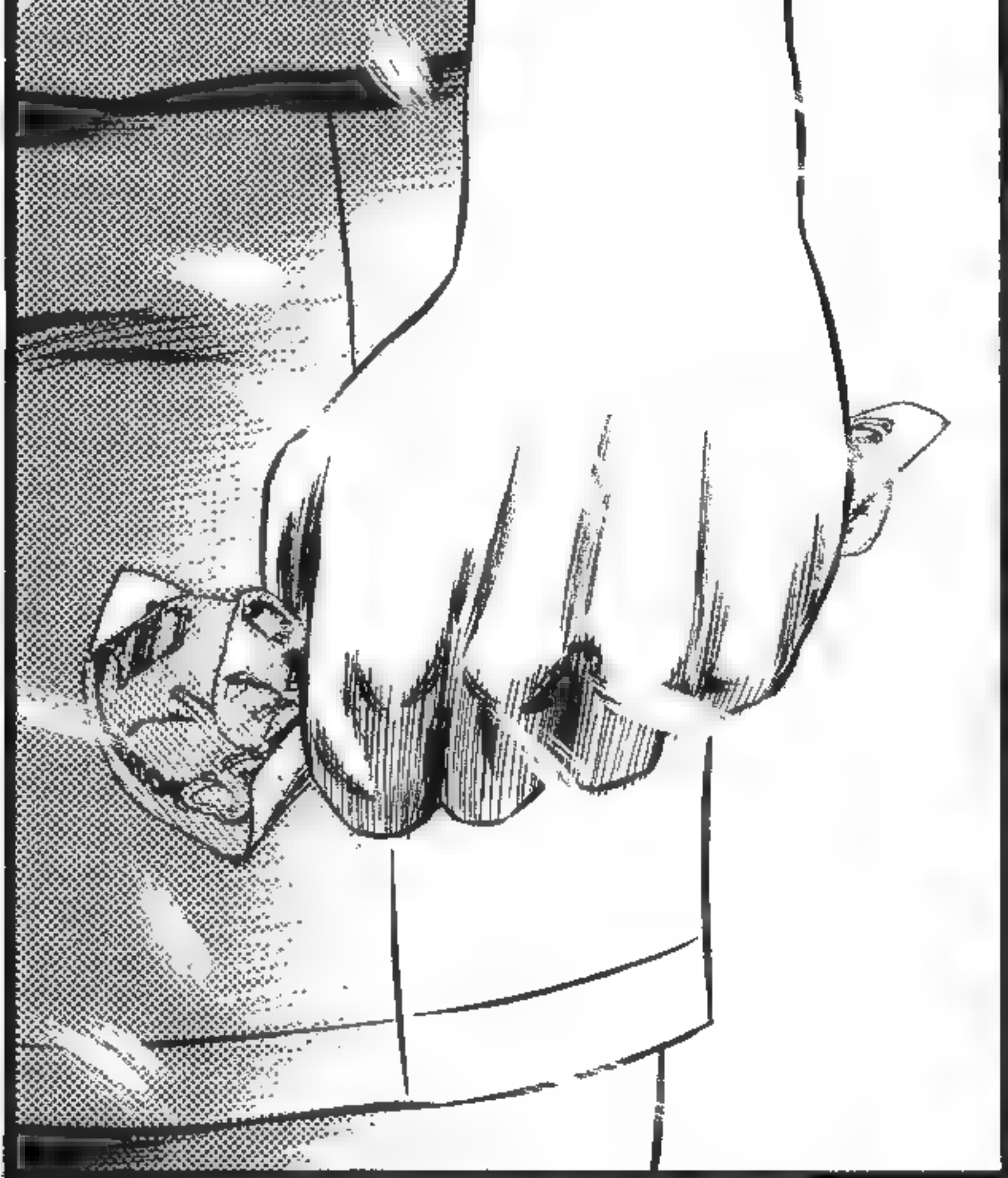


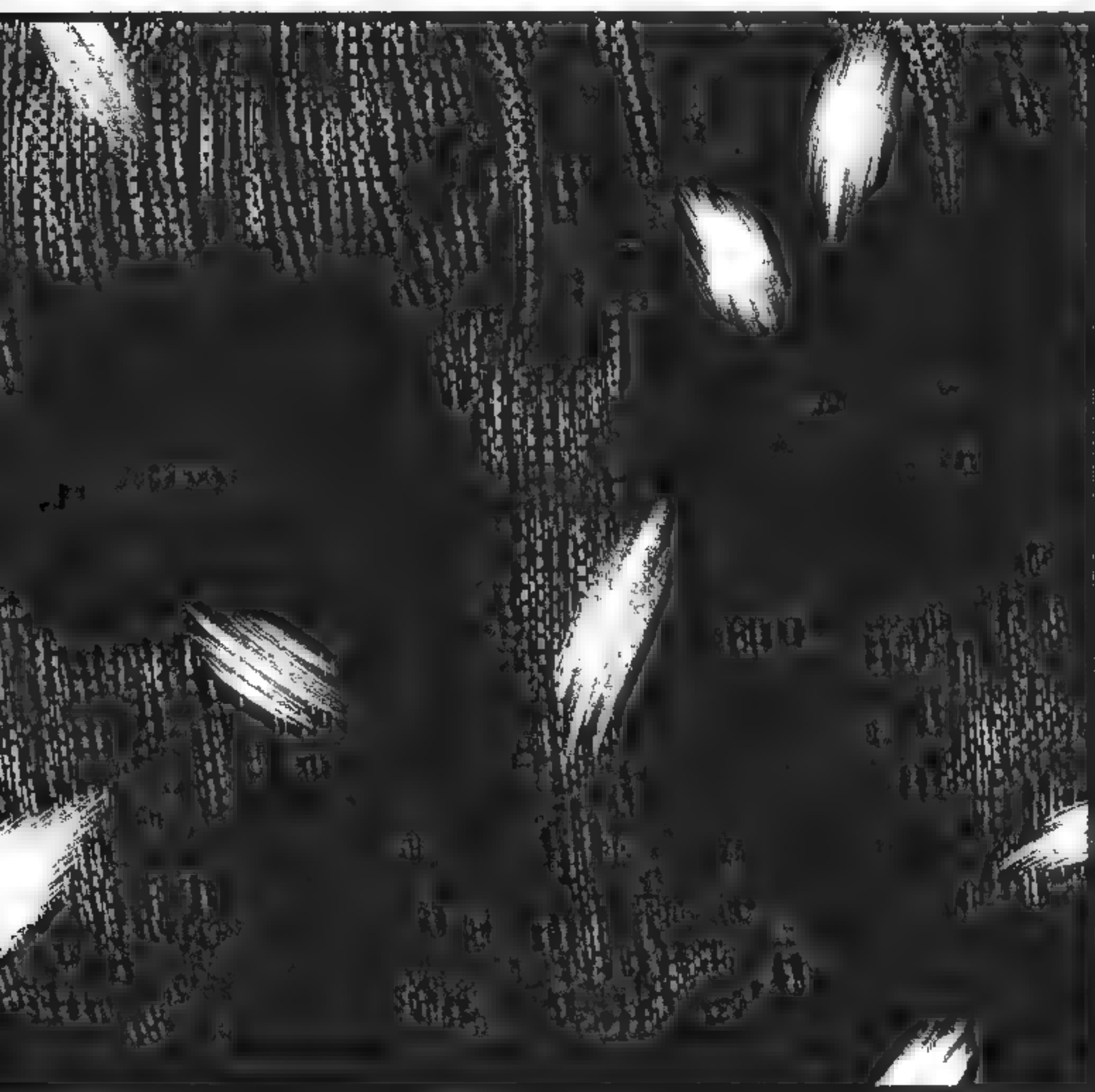
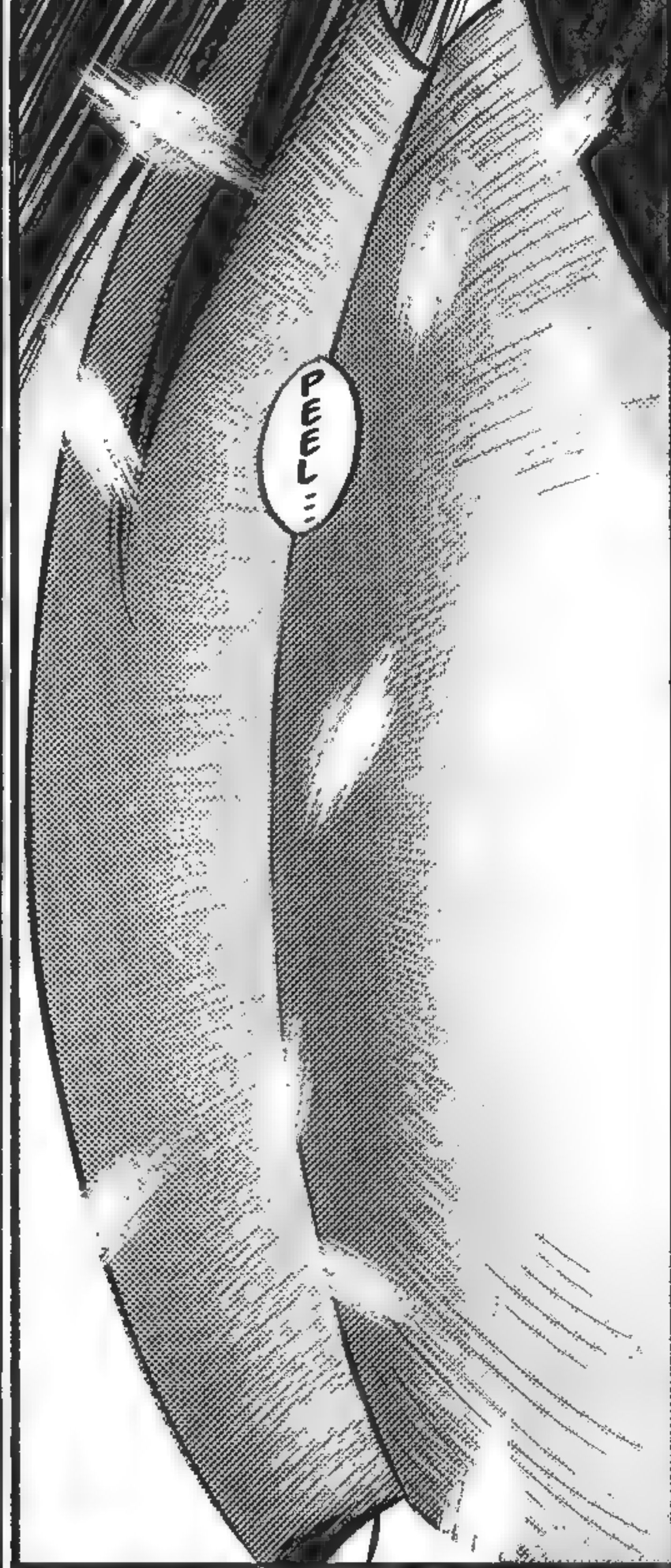
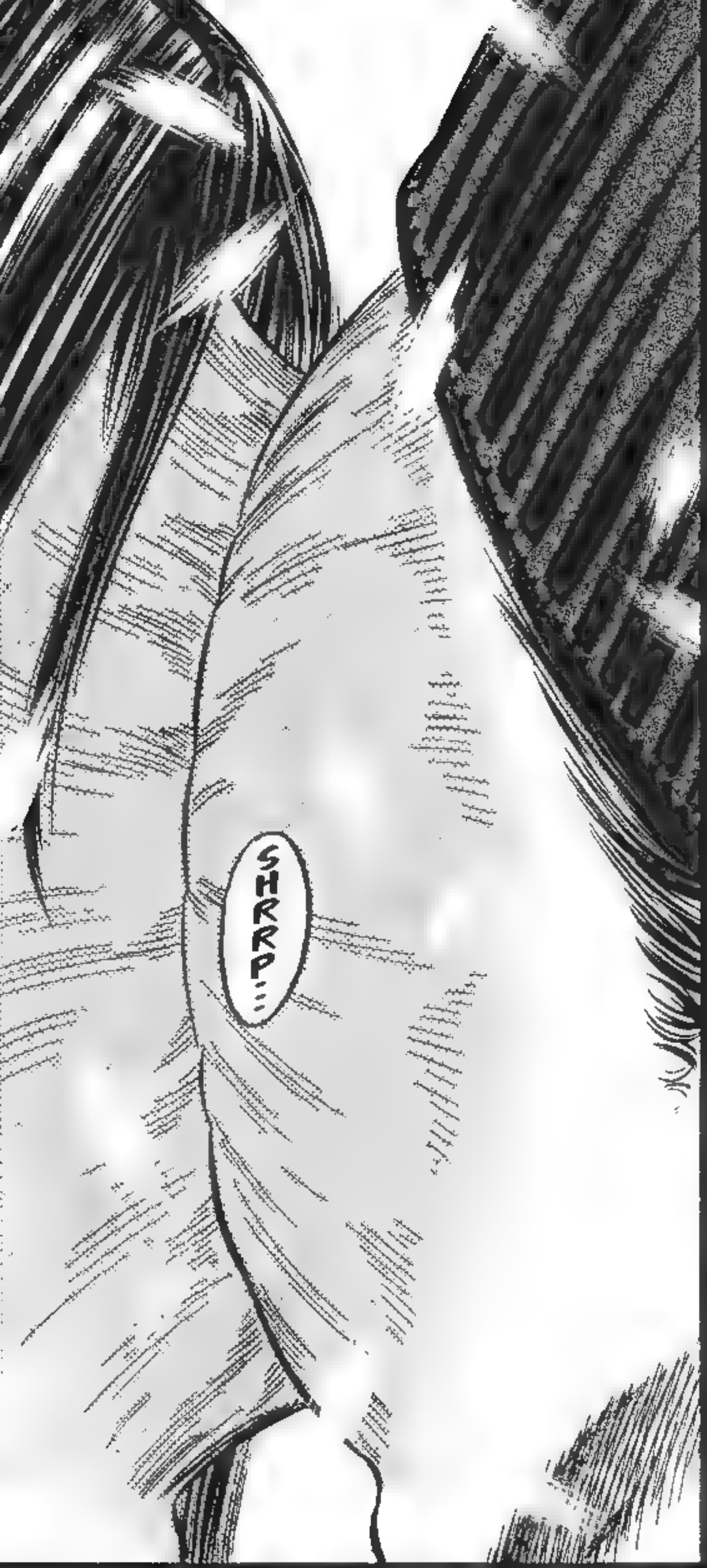
DEEPER
AND
DEEPER
AND
DEEPER.



I WANT
TO SEE
ALL OF
YOU!!







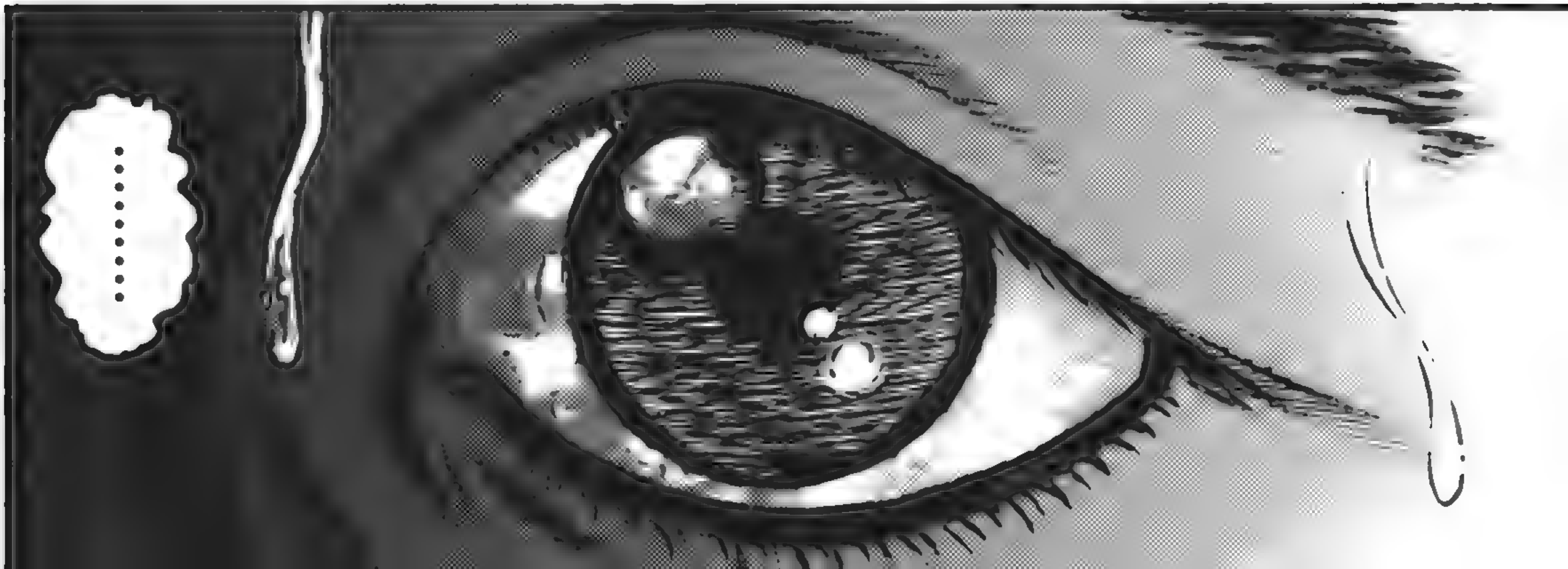
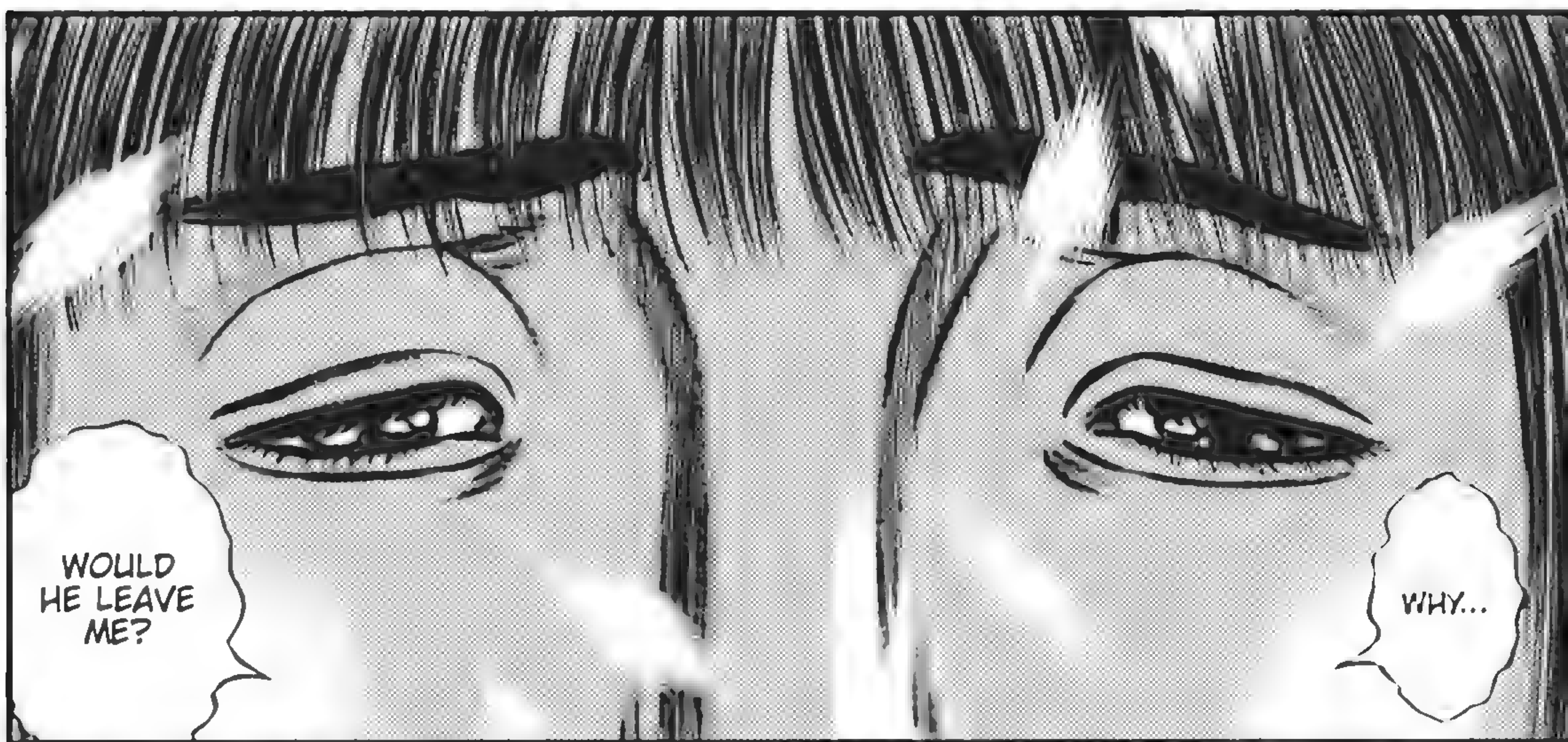




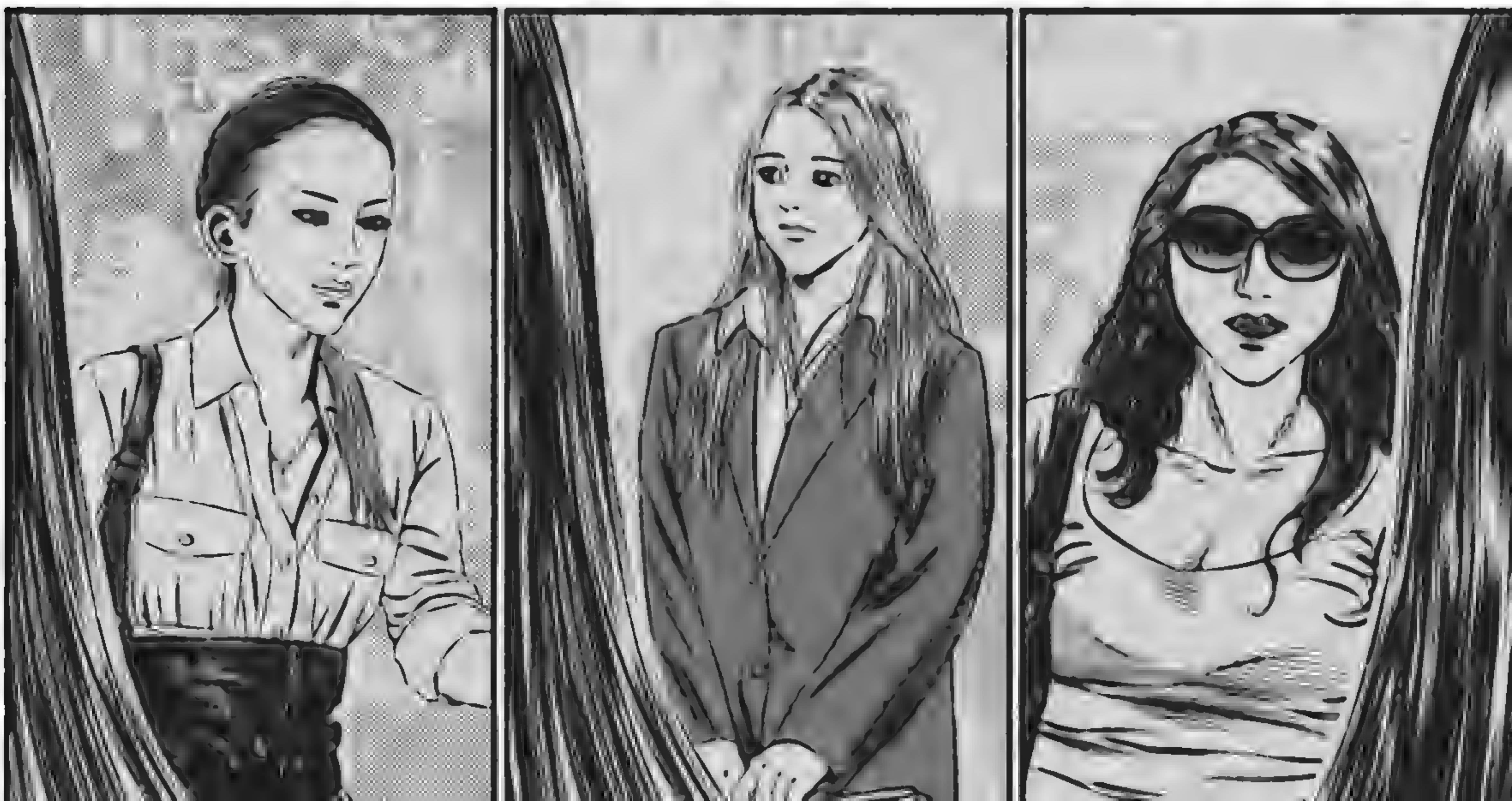


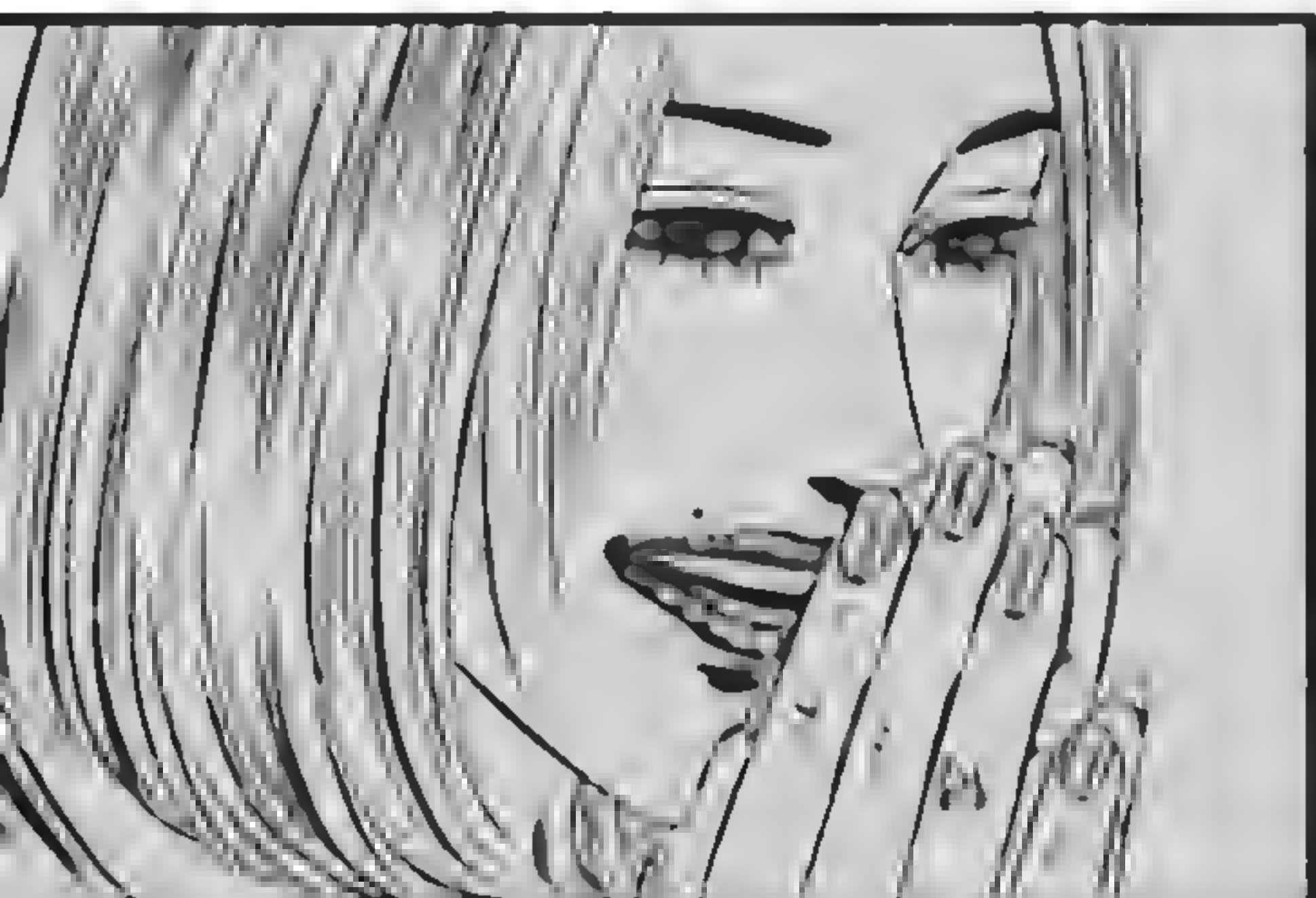
!!

WHY
WOULD A
MAN WHO
"LOVES"
ME RUN
AWAY?!

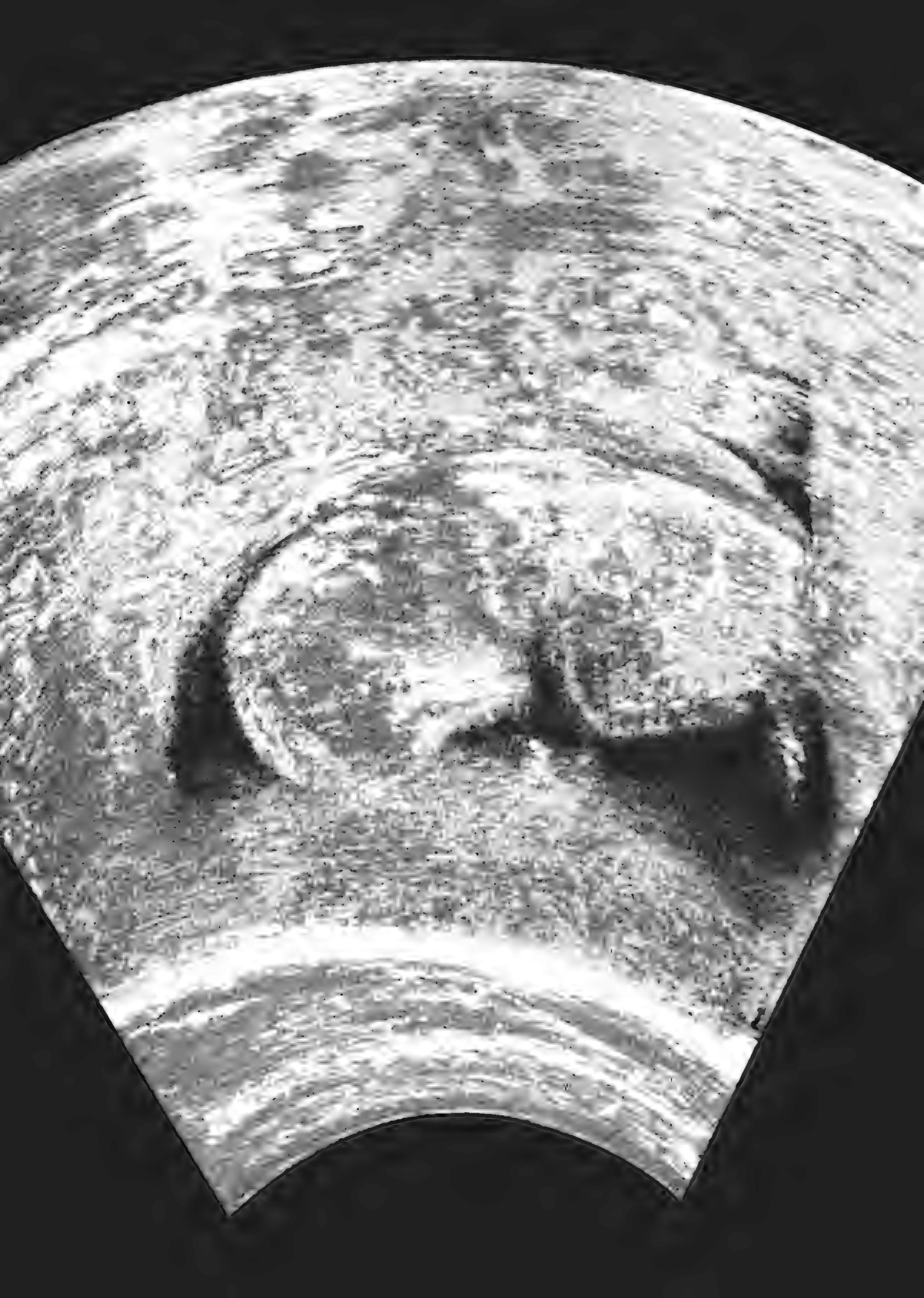






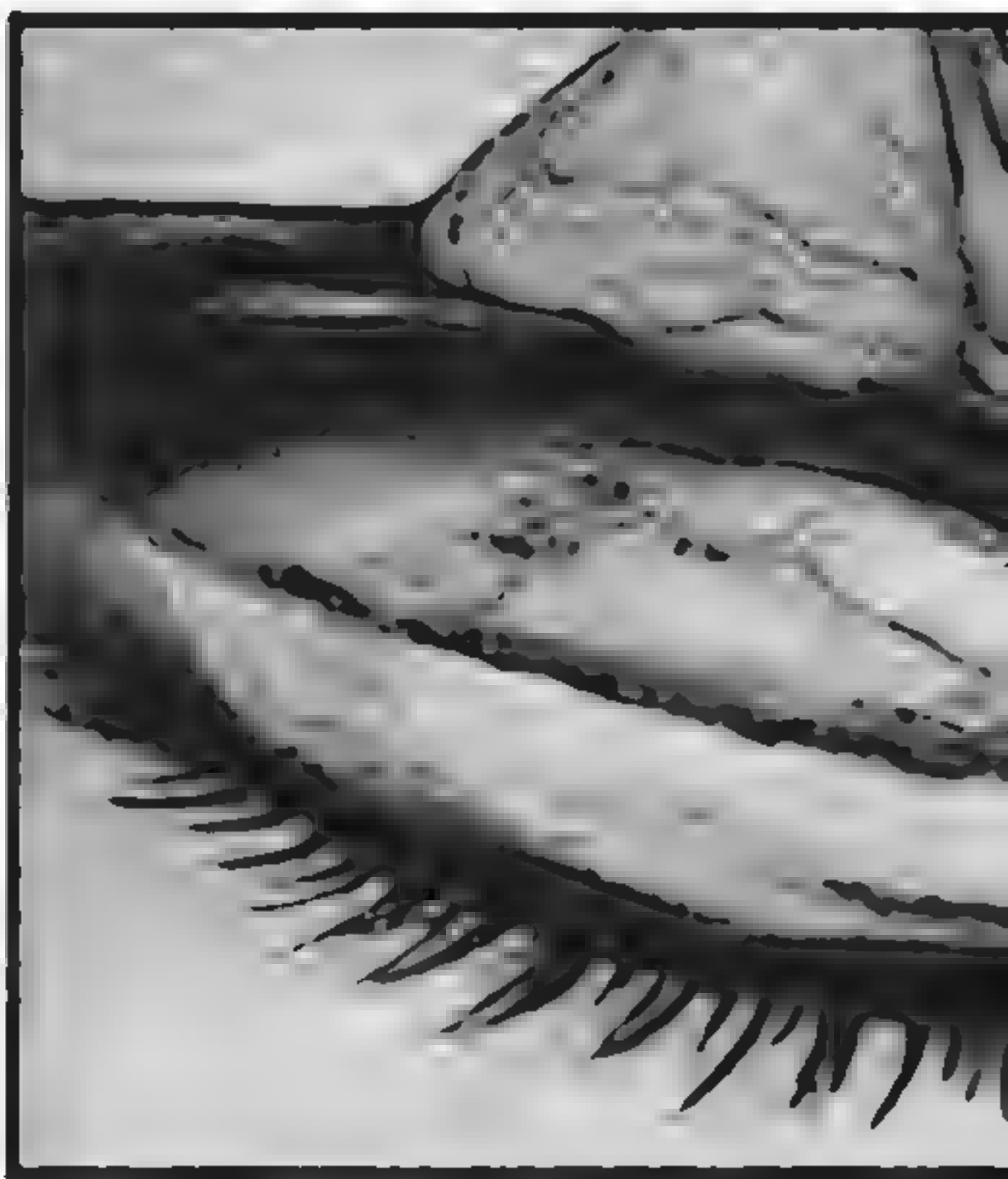
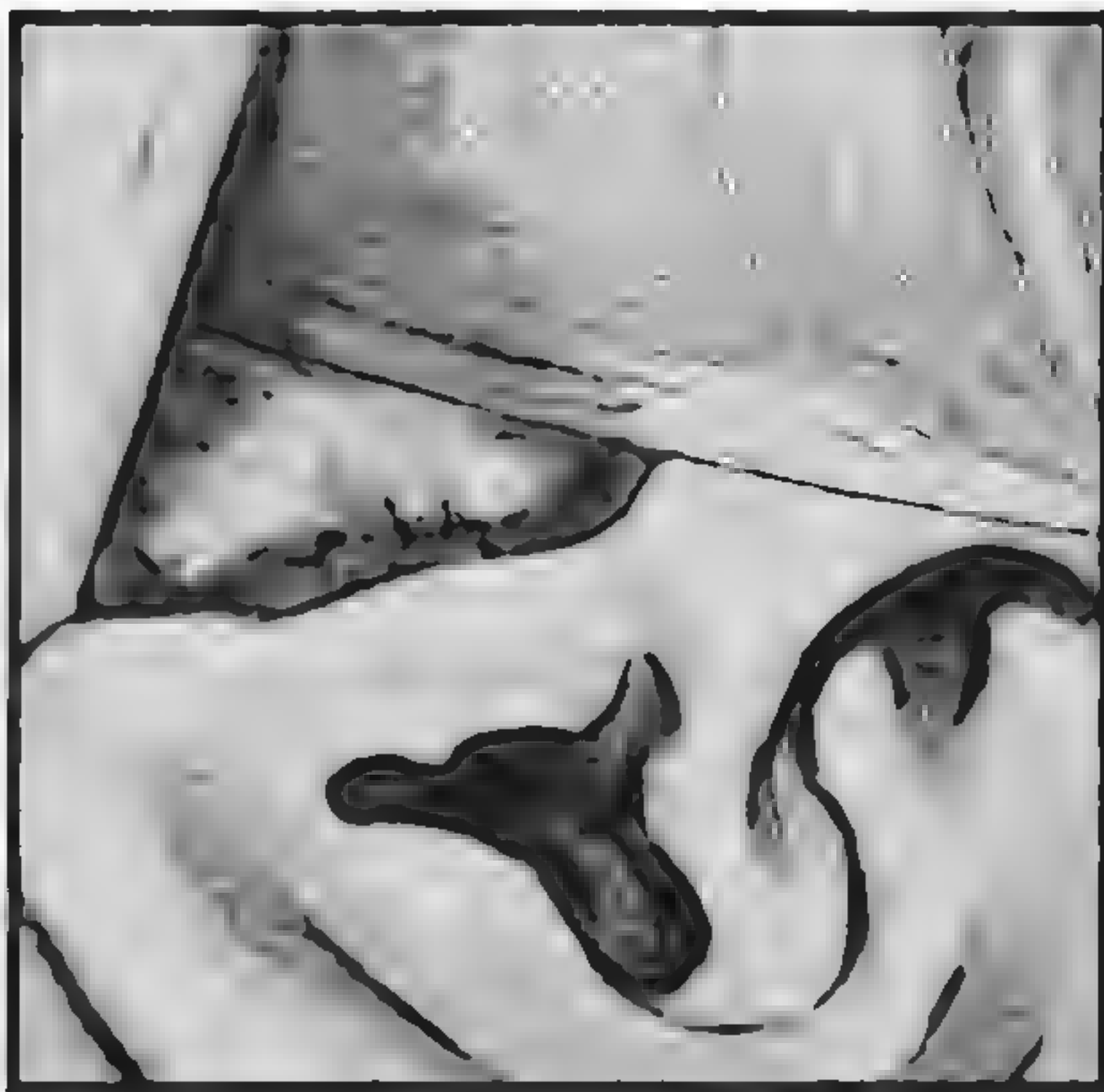
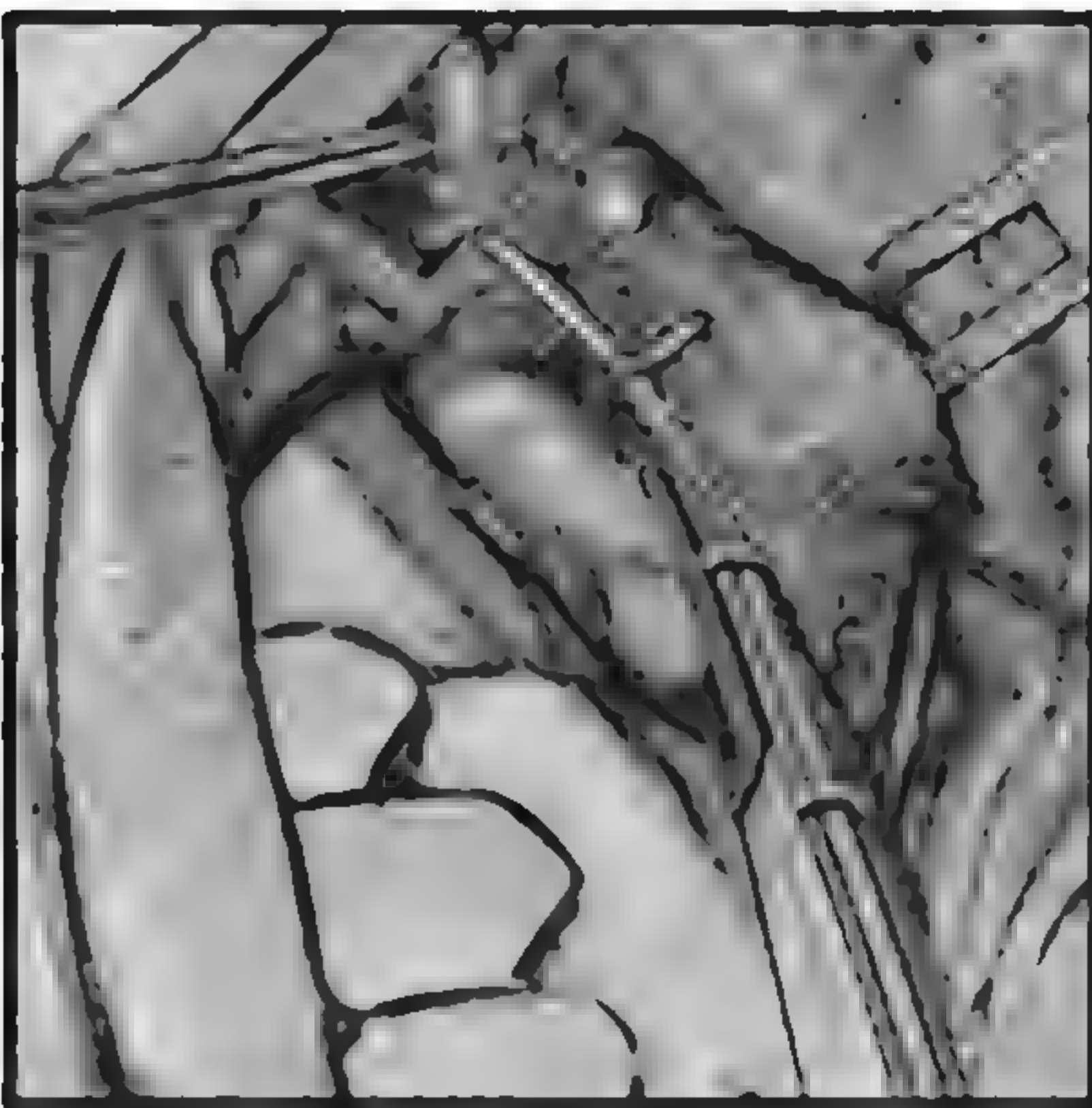










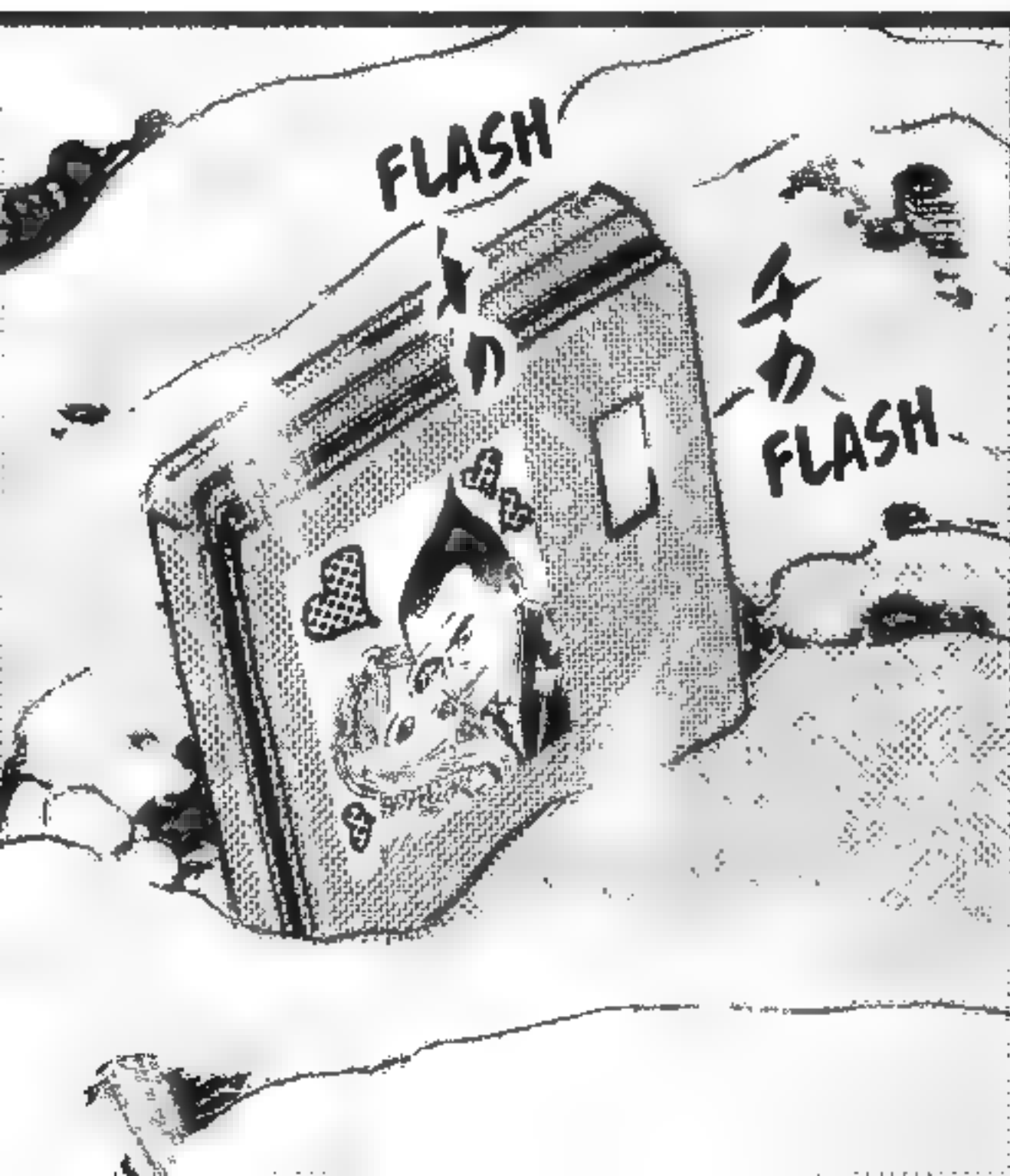
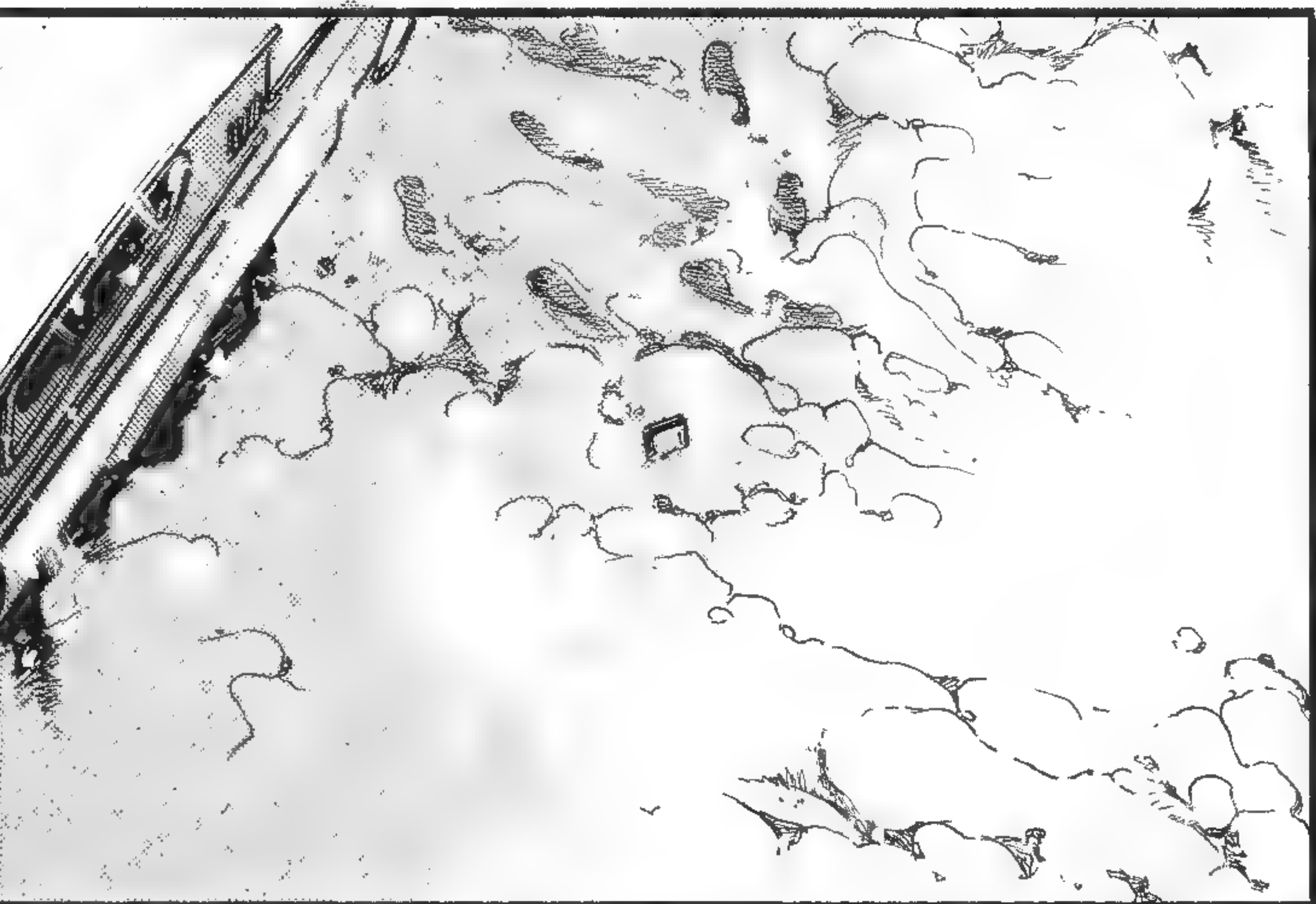




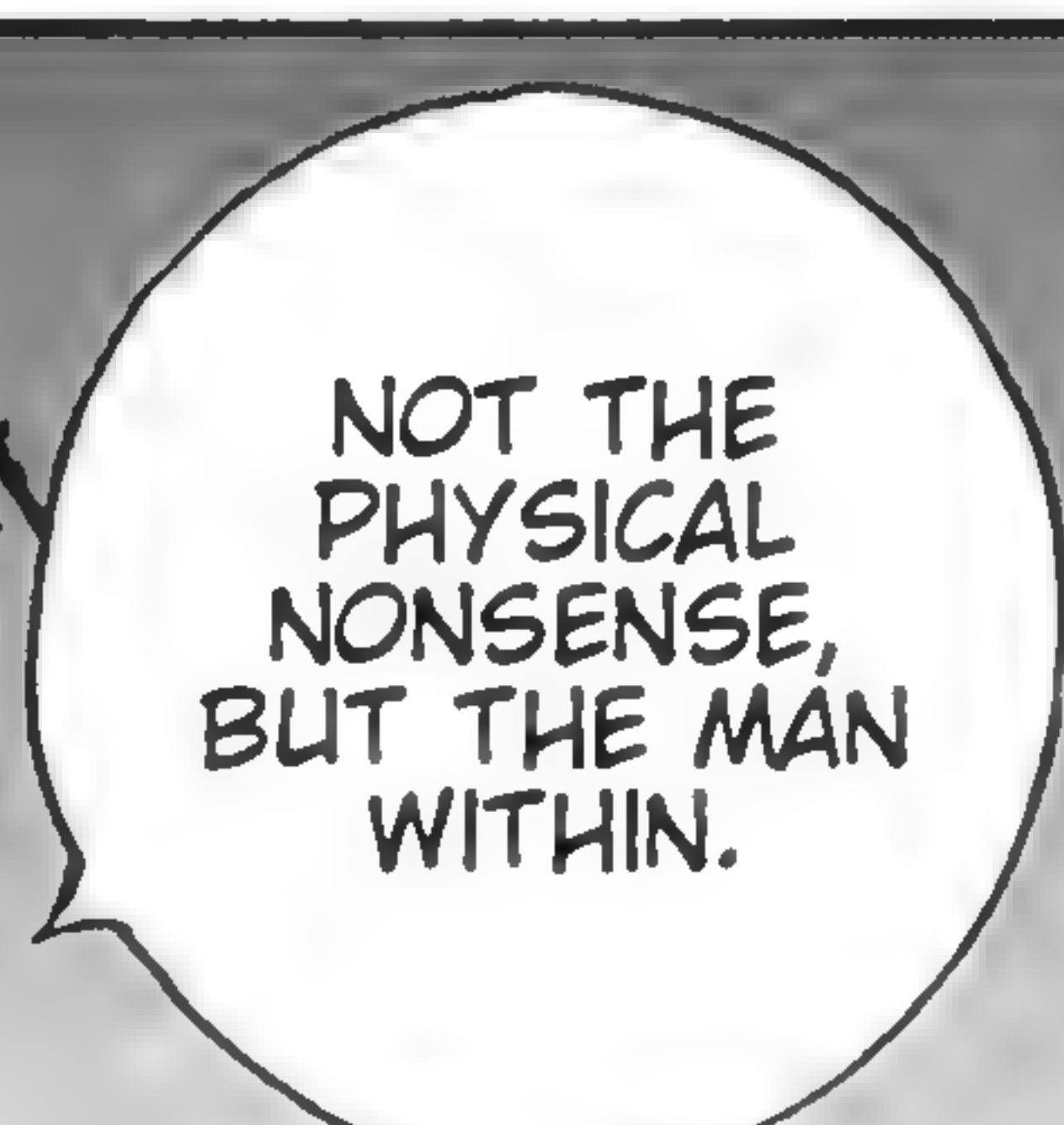
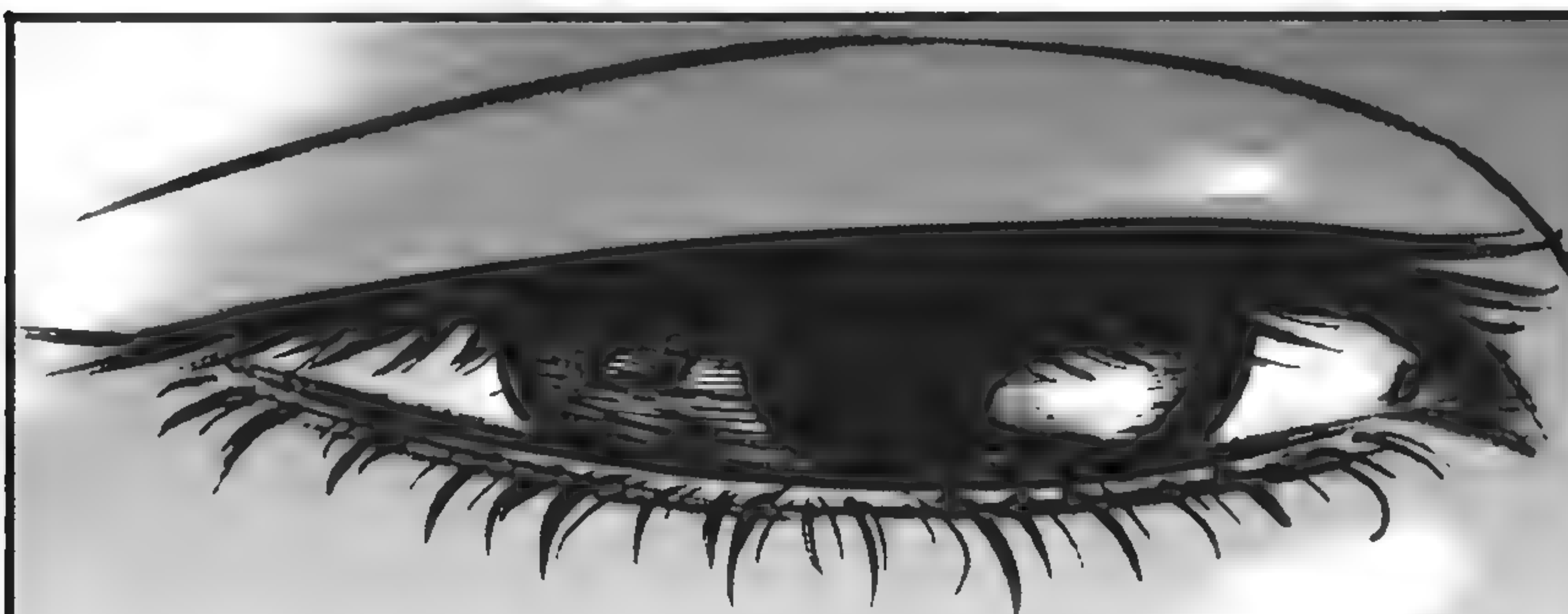
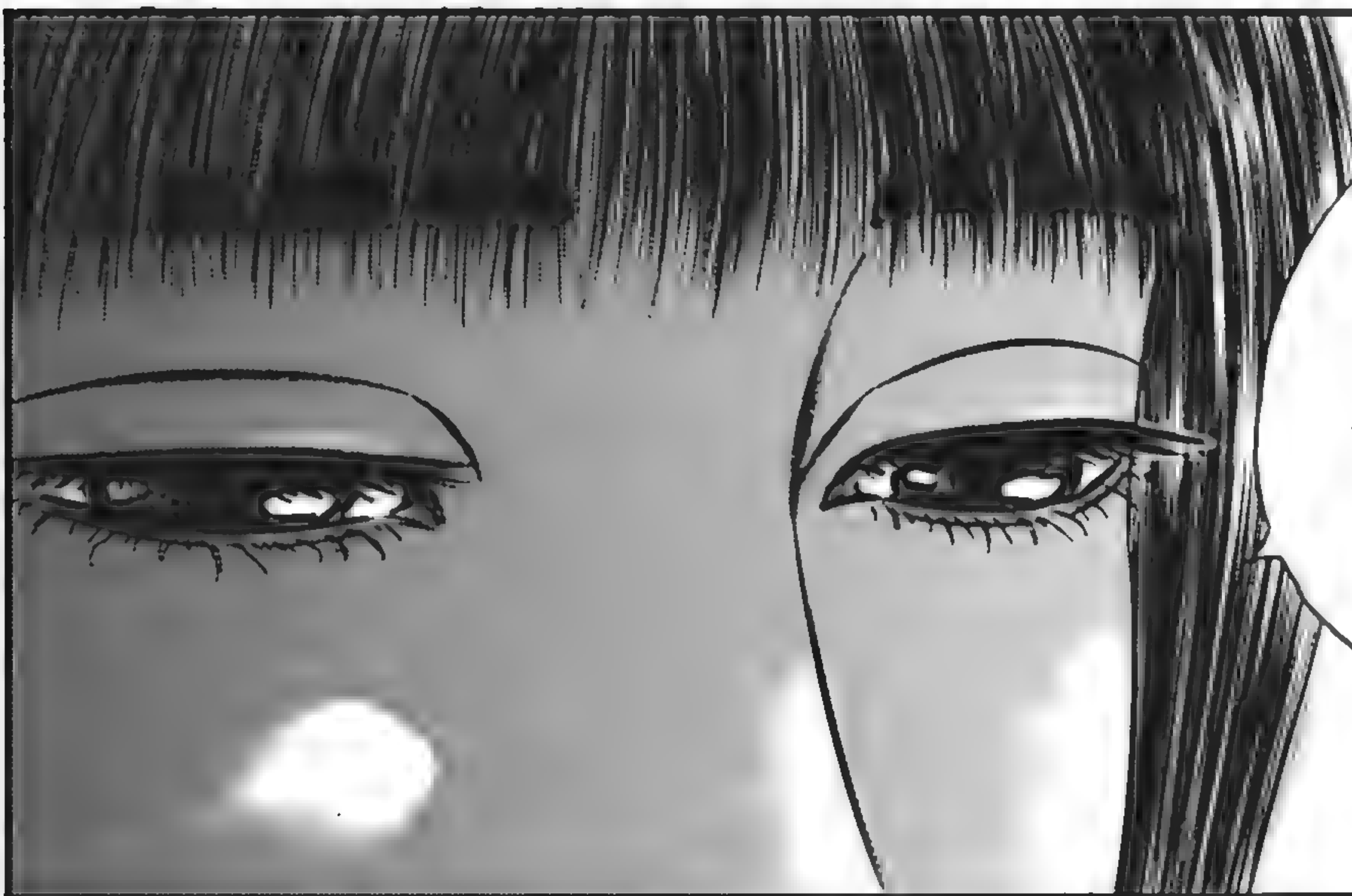
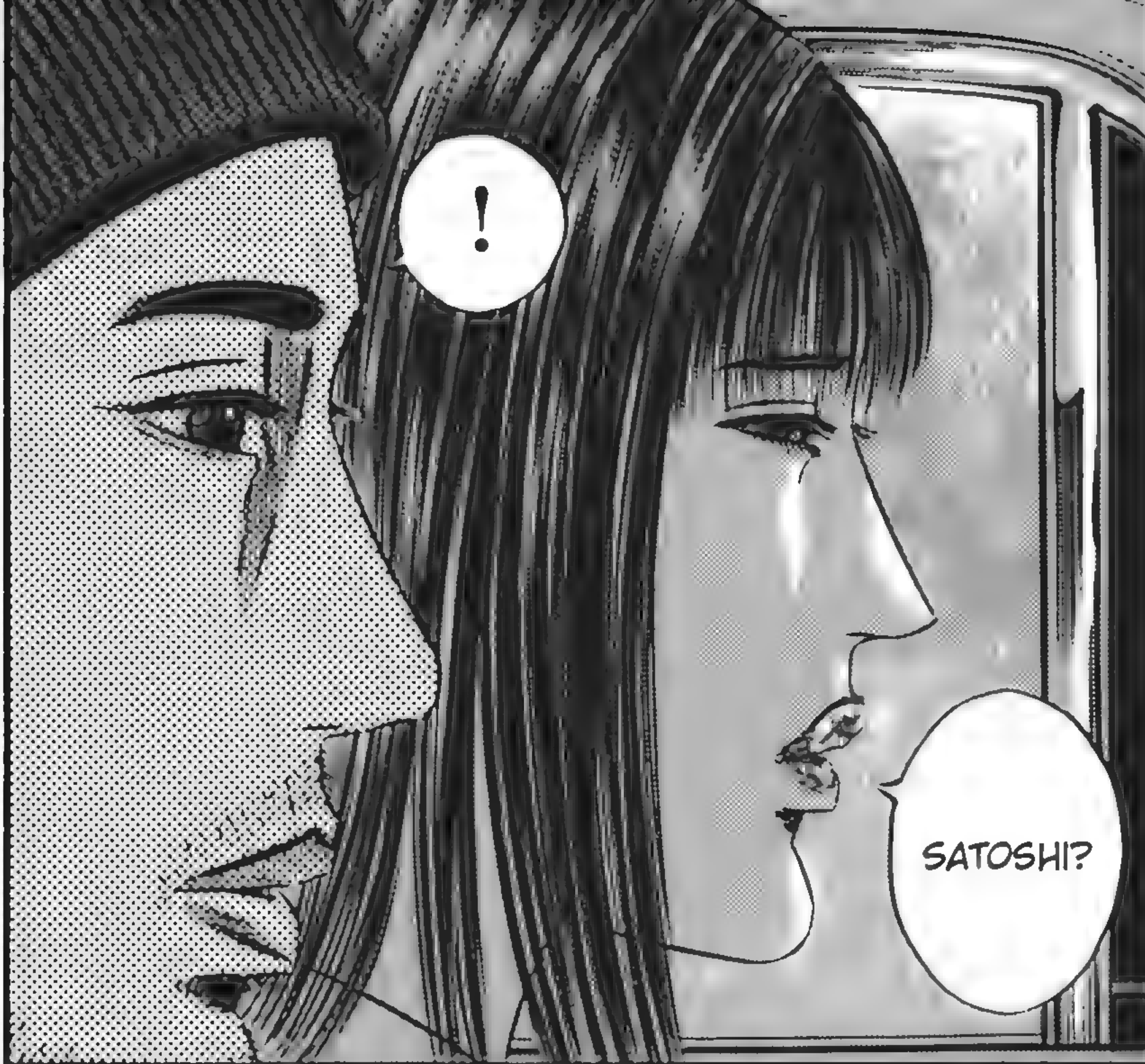


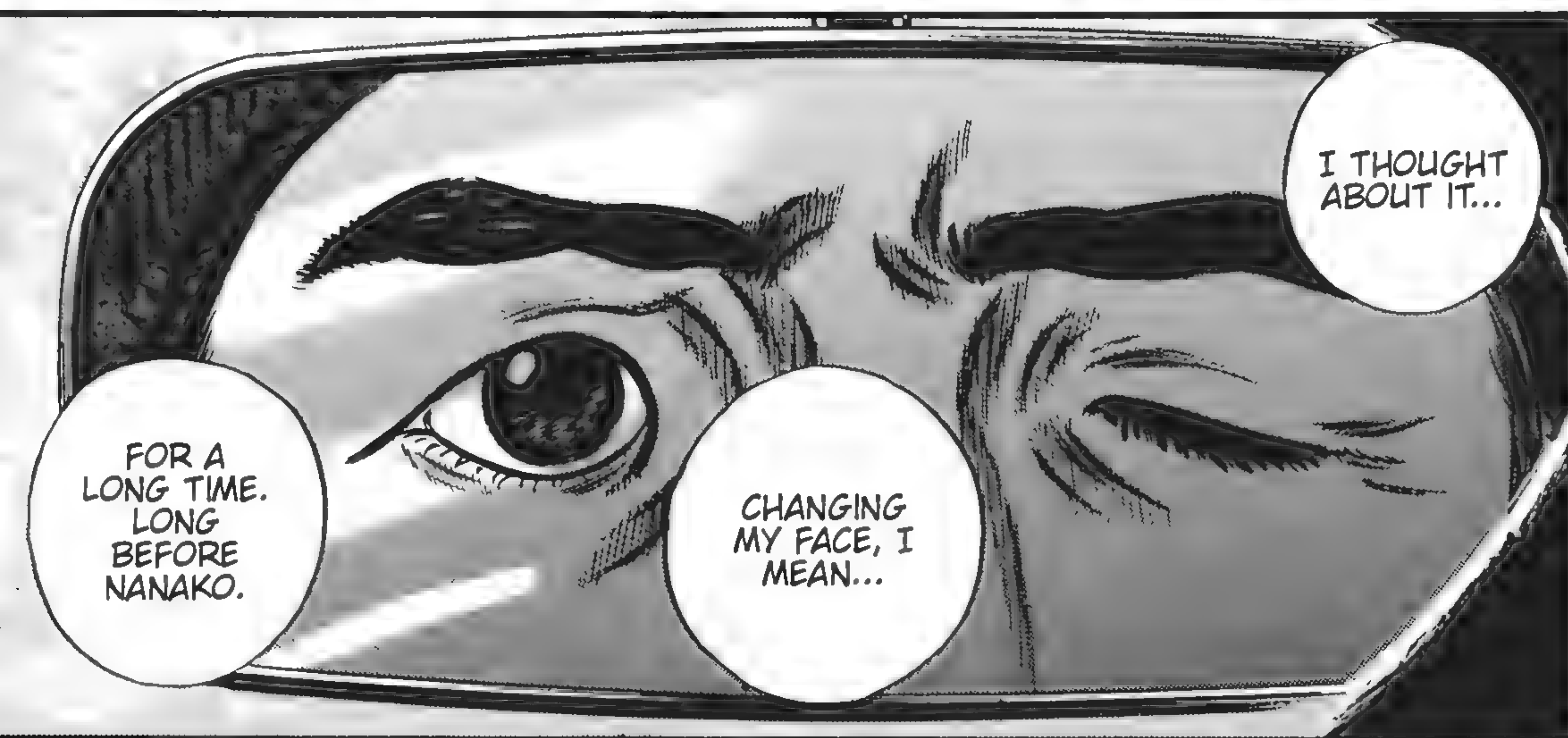
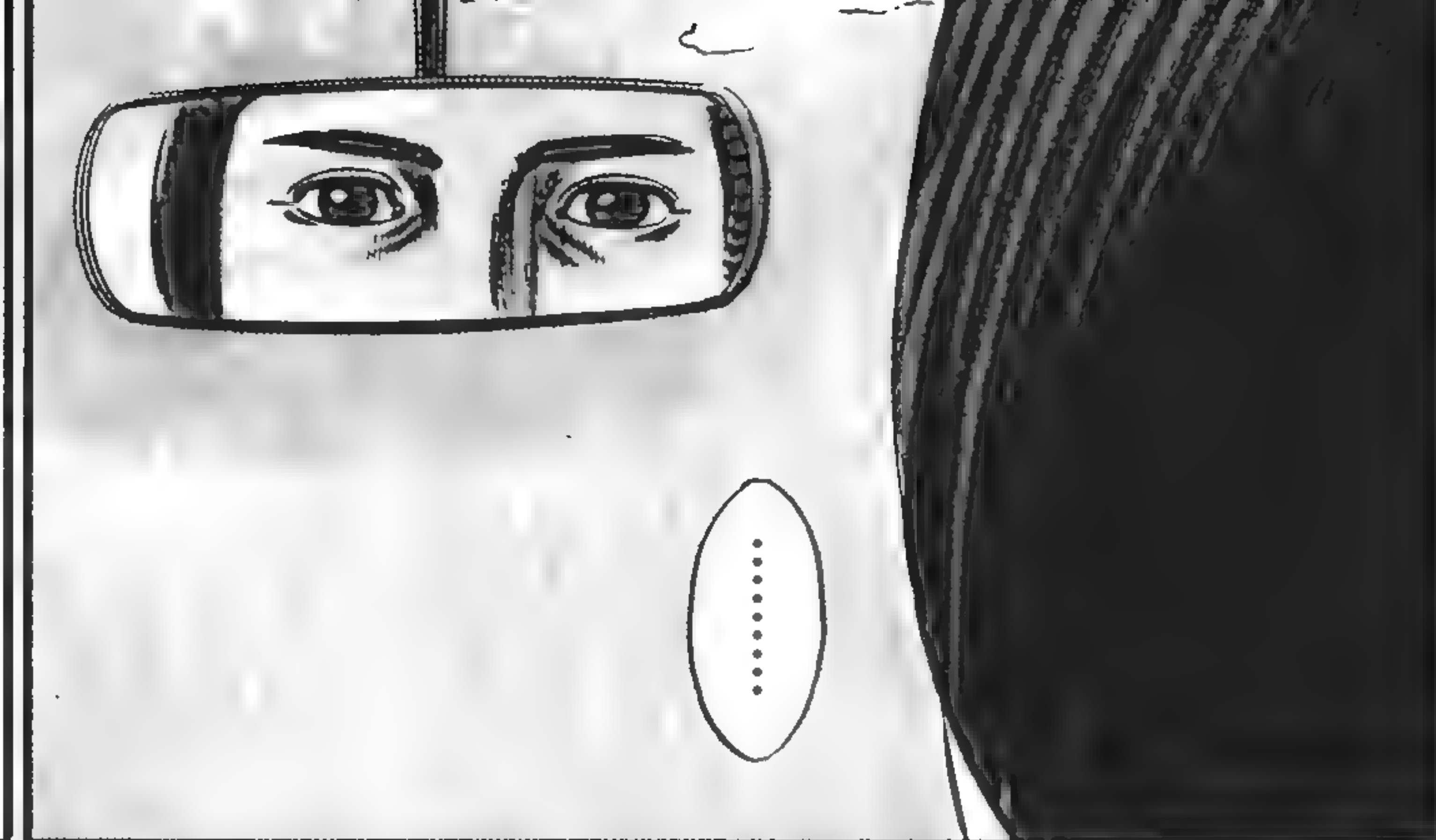










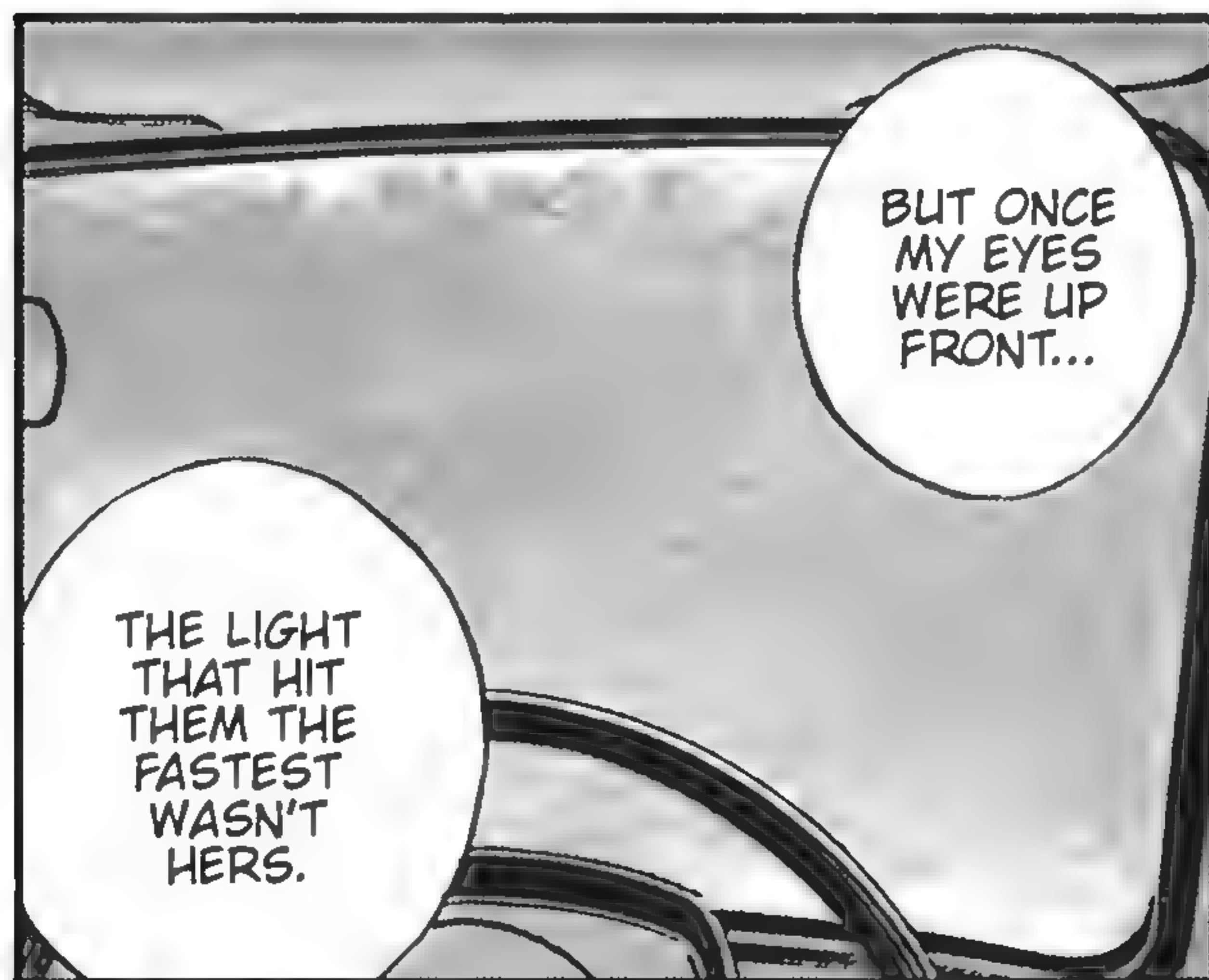




SHE SAW
ME FOR
ME...

BUT
THEN...

I MET
HER.

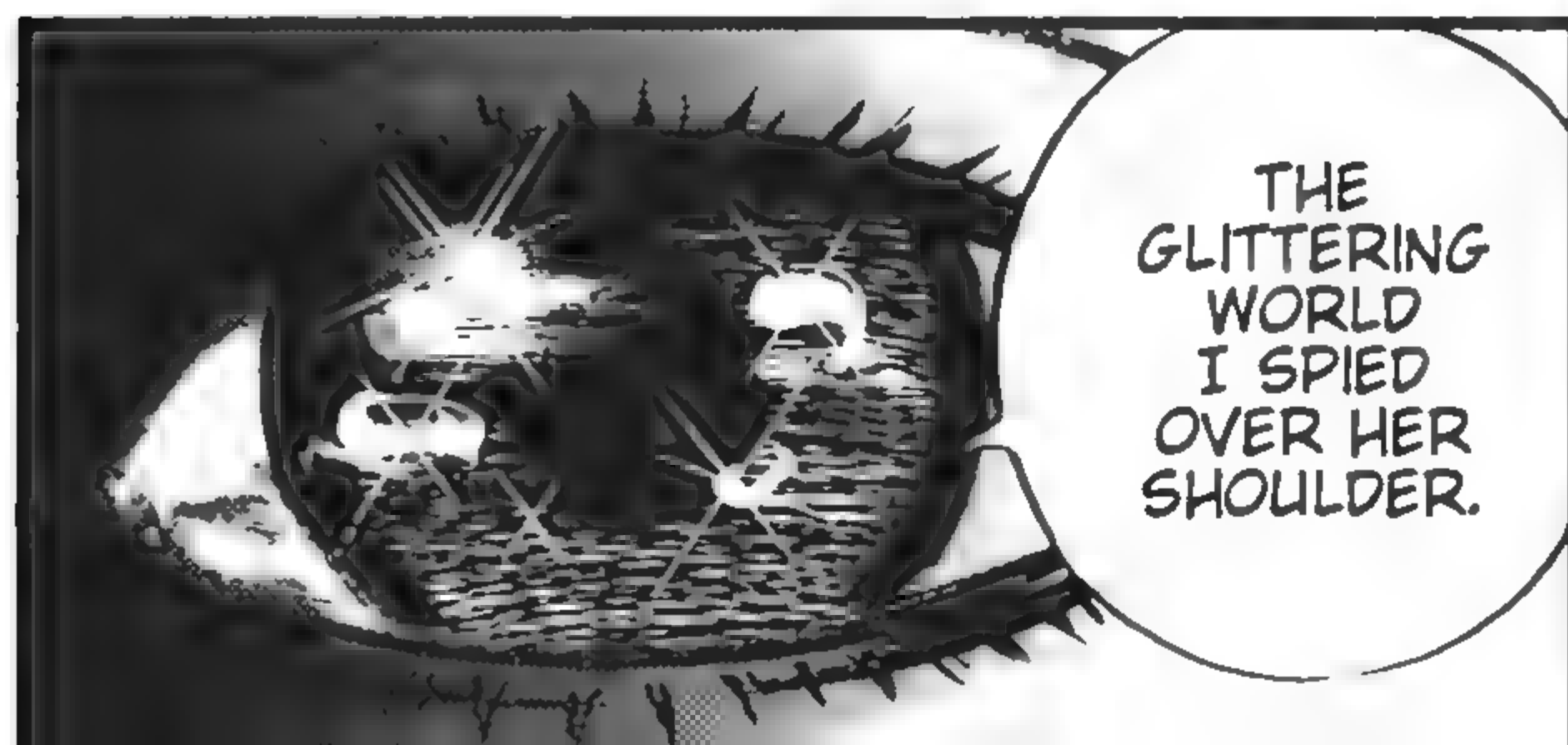


THE LIGHT
THAT HIT
THEM THE
FASTEST
WASN'T
HERS.

BUT ONCE
MY EYES
WERE UP
FRONT...



IT WAS
THE LIGHT
REFLECTED
OFF OF
THINGS.



THE
GLITTERING
WORLD
I SPIED
OVER HER
SHOULDER.



AND GAVE
ME THE
STRENGTH
TO FACE
FORWARD.



THOSE CHESTS,
HIPS, LEGS,
BODIES, AND
BEAUTIFUL
FACES...

SPARKLED
IN THE LIGHT,
DAZZLING ME.



THE THINGS
I USED TO
SCOFF AT...

THOSE
SLUTTY,
EMPTY-HEADED
PIGS, HOLDING
COURT AT THE
CENTER OF
ATTENTION...

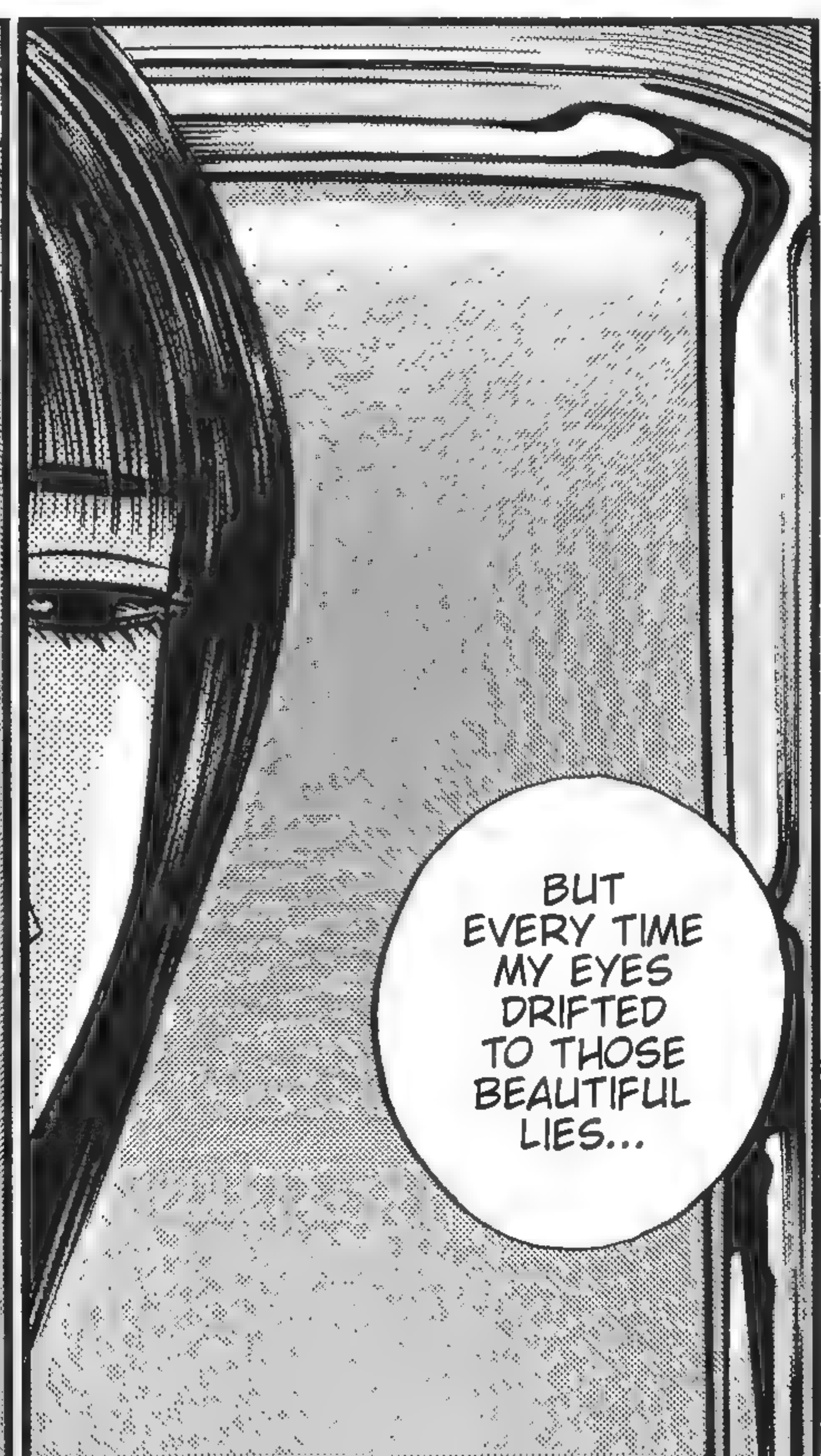


AND
LOOK
AT ME
AGAIN.



NANAKO
...

WOULD
COME BACK
INTO MY
GAZE...



BUT
EVERY TIME
MY EYES
DRIFTED
TO THOSE
BEAUTIFUL
LIES...



IT
SCARED
THE HELL
OUT OF
ME.



THE WAY
SHE'D STARE
UP AT ME
FROM BELOW
LIKE THAT...

IT WAS LIKE
LOOKING DOWN A
WELL AND SEEING
A CAVE-DWELLER
PEERING BACK AT
YOU FROM THE
DARK.



ONLY
TO LOOK
BACK
DOWN...

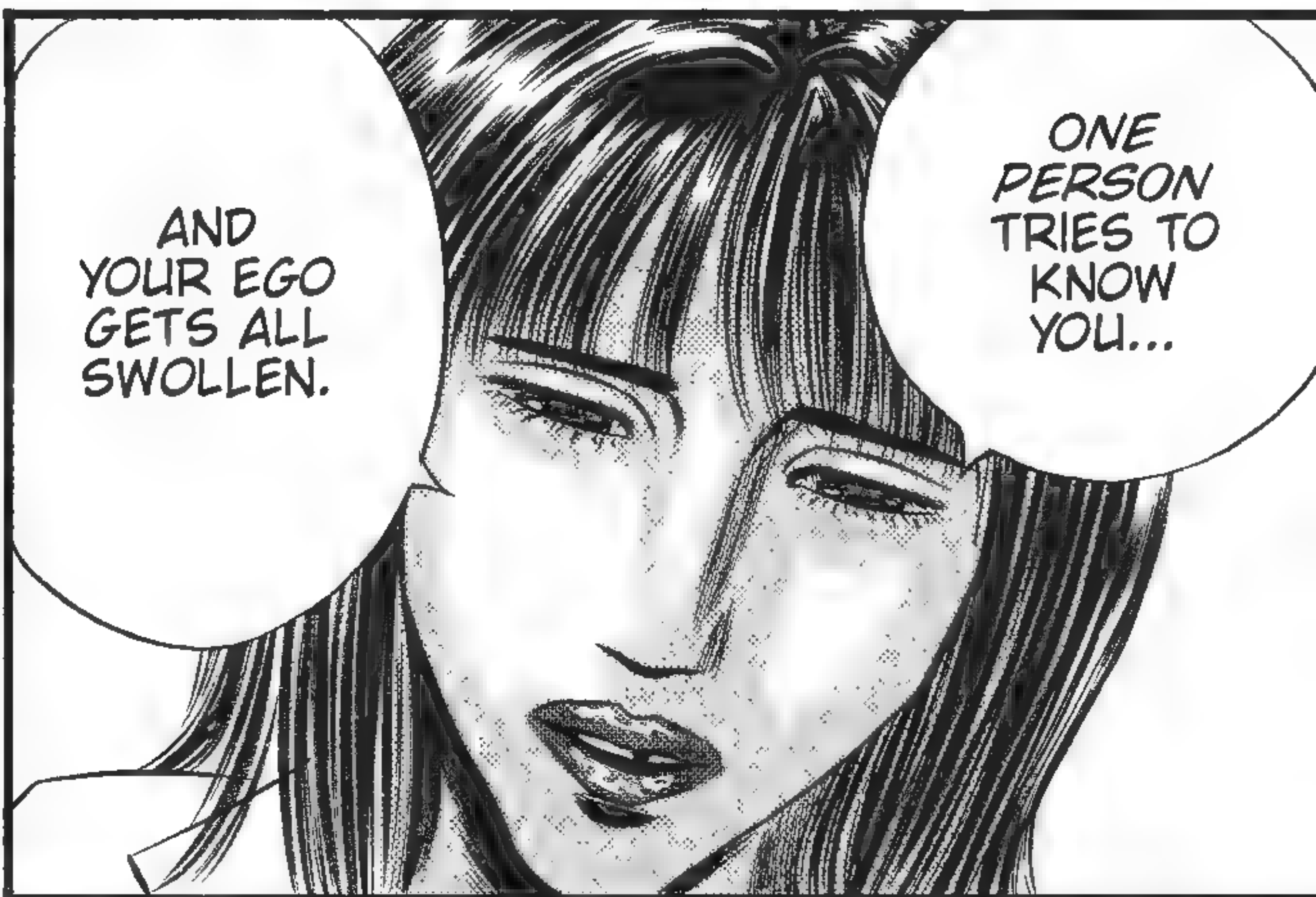
I'D LOOK UP AT
ALL THESE NEW,
GLAMOROUS LIES
AND FEEL SO
INTOXICATED BY
THEM...



AND BE
MET WITH THE
UNDERGROUND
THAT THREAT-
ENED TO SUCK
ME IN AT ANY
MOMENT.



IT
SCARED
THE HELL
OUT OF
ME.





A TIME
WHEN THINGS
SPARKLE ALL
THE MORE
BRIGHTLY...



I
JUST...

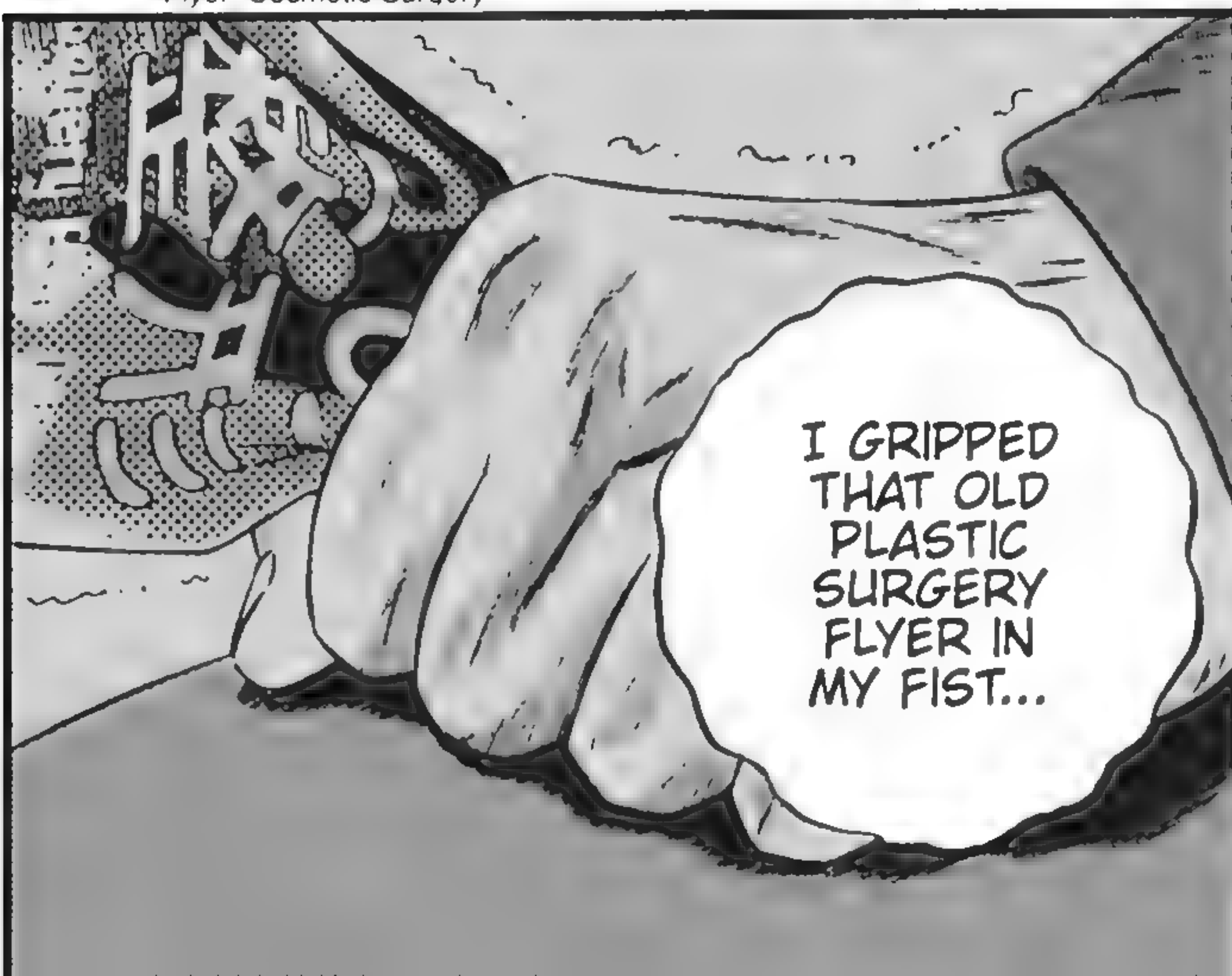


COULDN'T
STAND...

SPENDING
CHRISTMAS
WITH
SOMEONE
SO UGLY!



Flyer Cosmetic Surgery



I GRIPPED
THAT OLD
PLASTIC
SURGERY
FLYER IN
MY FIST...



SO...I
CAVED.



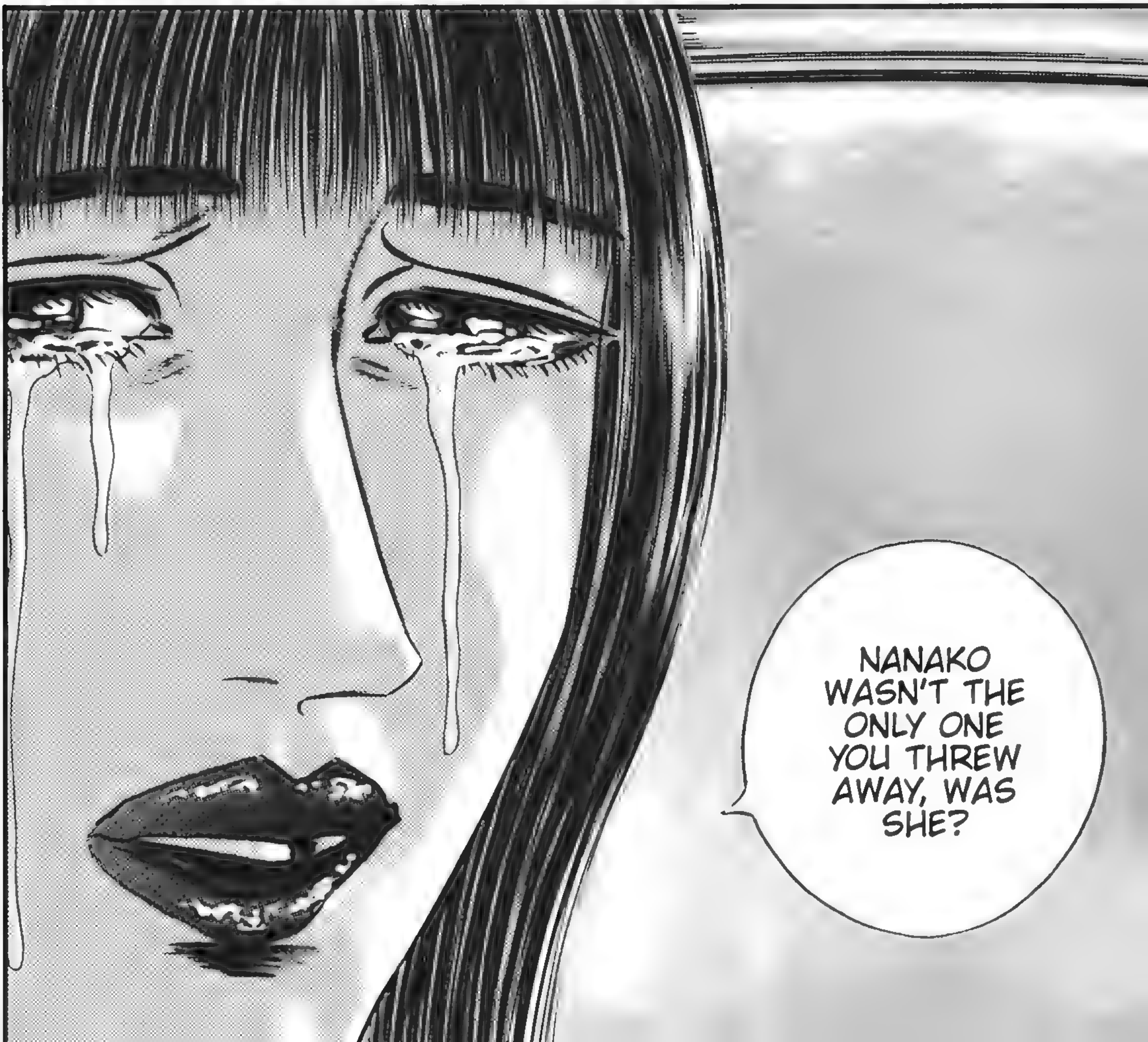
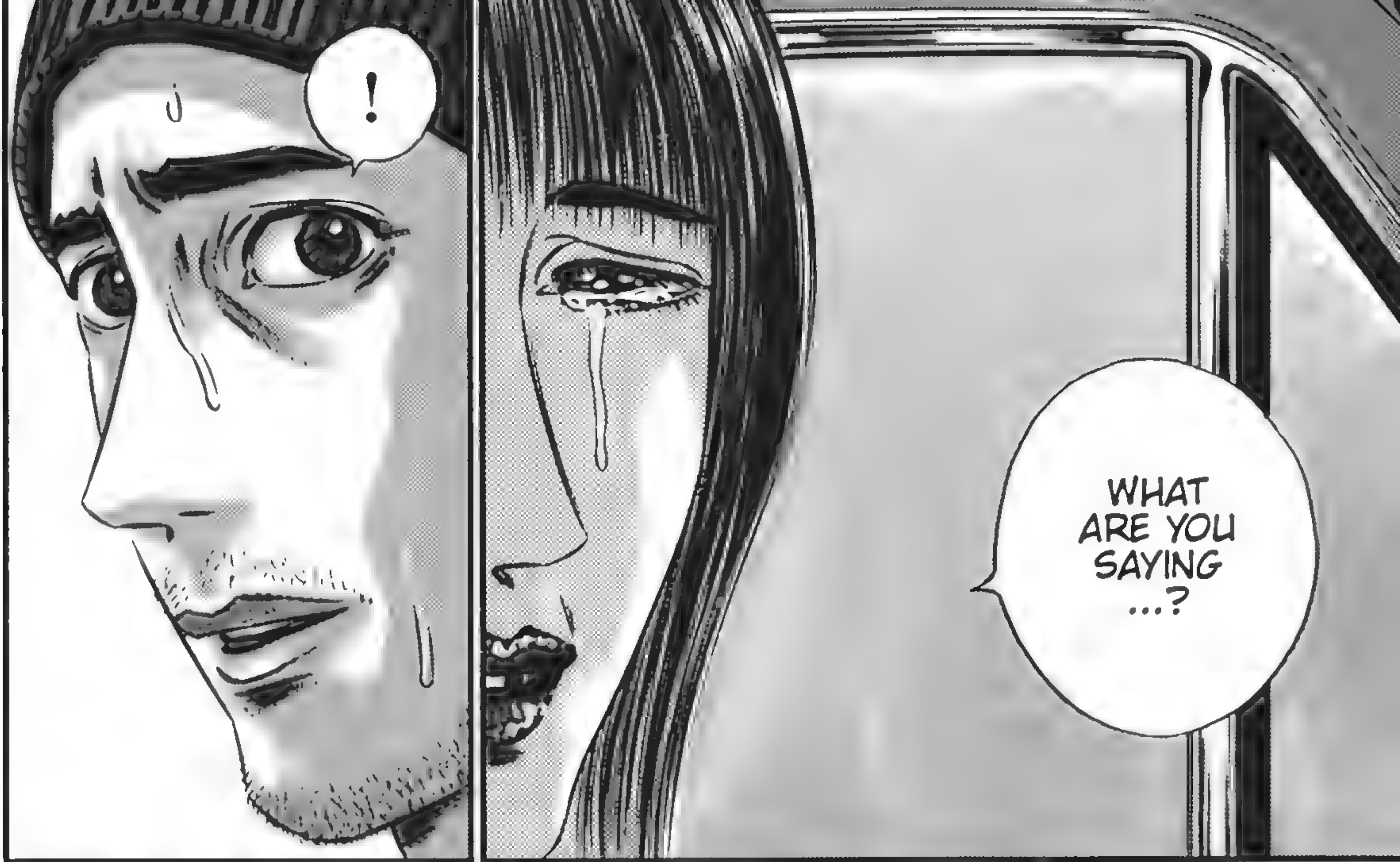
AND
RESOLVED
TO PLUNGE
MYSELF
HEADFIRST
INTO A
WORLD OF
LIES.



AND
NANAKO
IN THE
PROCESS.



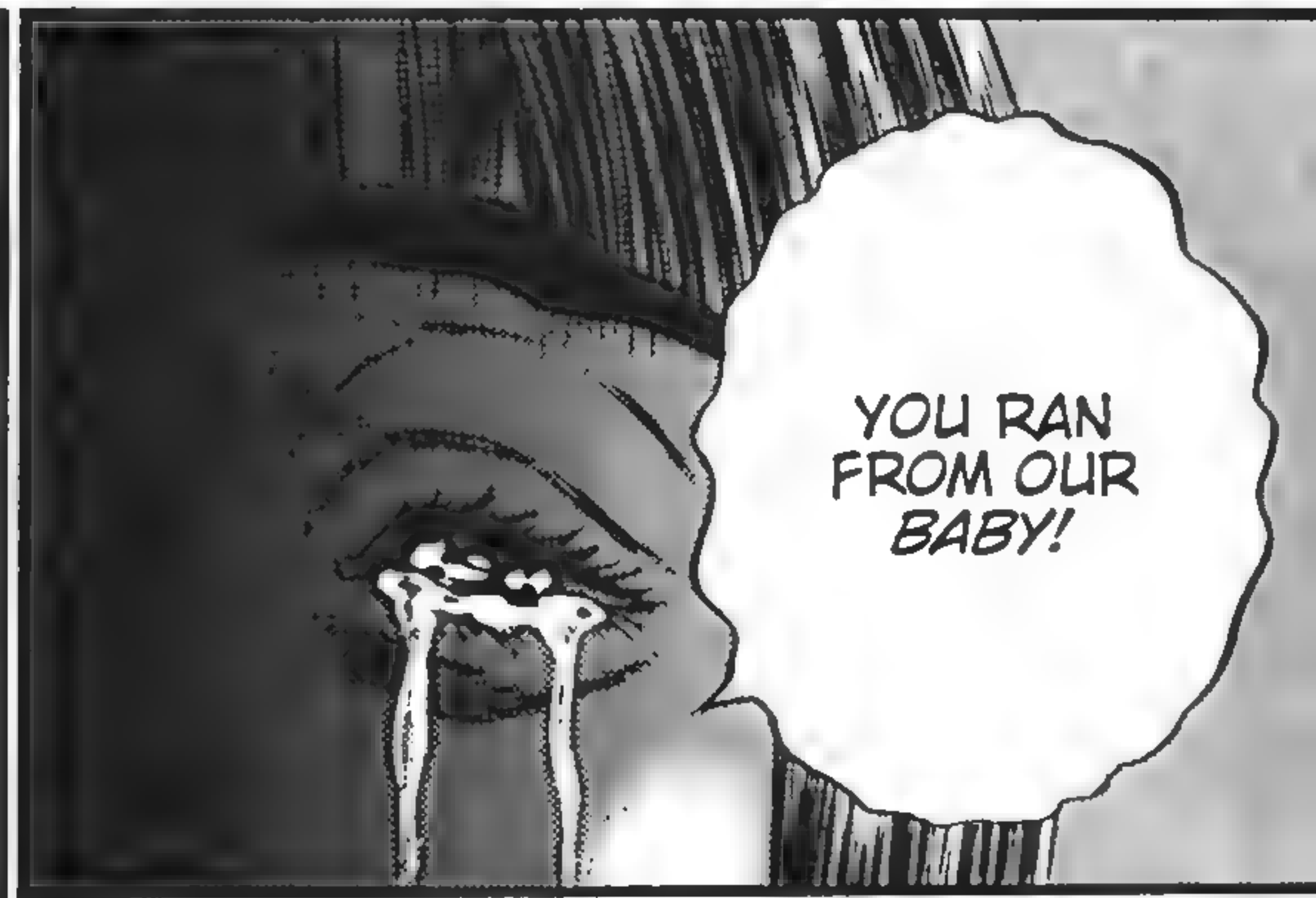
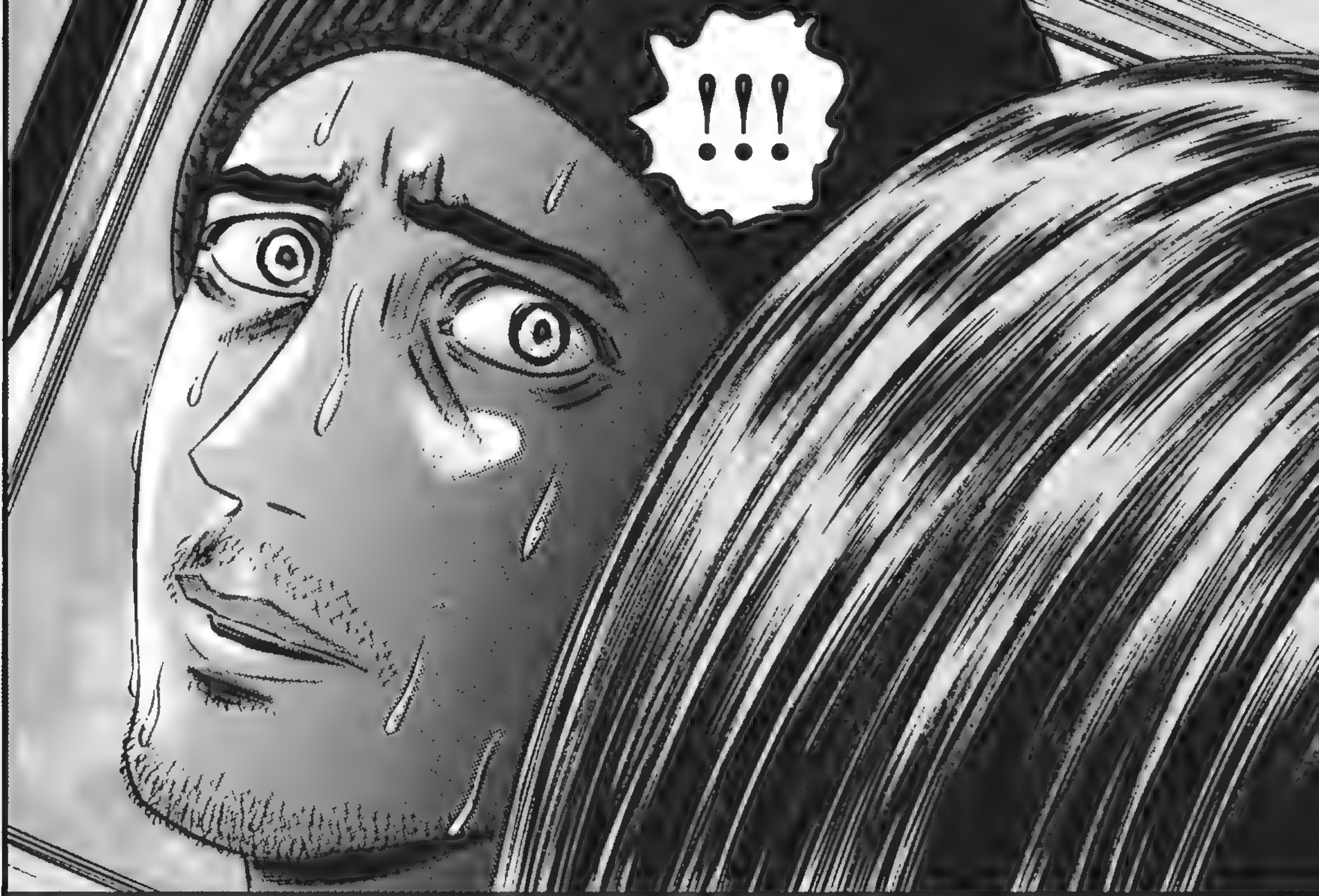
I THREW
AWAY MY
OLD FACE...







IT WAS
THE CHILD
IN HER
WOMB
TOO!



YOU RAN
FROM OUR
BABY!



YOU WANTED
SO BADLY TO
THROW YOUR
UGLY SELF
AWAY AND
BE REBORN
ANEW...

BUT WHO
WOULDN'T,
RIGHT?



AND THEN
A CLONE OF
YOURSELF
FORCED ITS
UGLY FACE BACK
INTO YOUR LIFE.
THAT MUST'VE
BEEN SO
HARD.



IT WAS
AWFUL.

YEAH.



YOU'RE
RIGHT.

THE
PREGNANCY'S
WHAT FINALLY
MADE ME DO
IT.



THAT'S
RIGHT...



I DIDN'T
EVEN FEEL
LIKE I WAS
ALIVE.

I WAS SOMEONE
NO ONE EVER
LOOKED AT.
SOMEONE NO ONE
REMEMBERED.
ALWAYS IGNORED,
NEVER VALUED OR
RESPECTED...

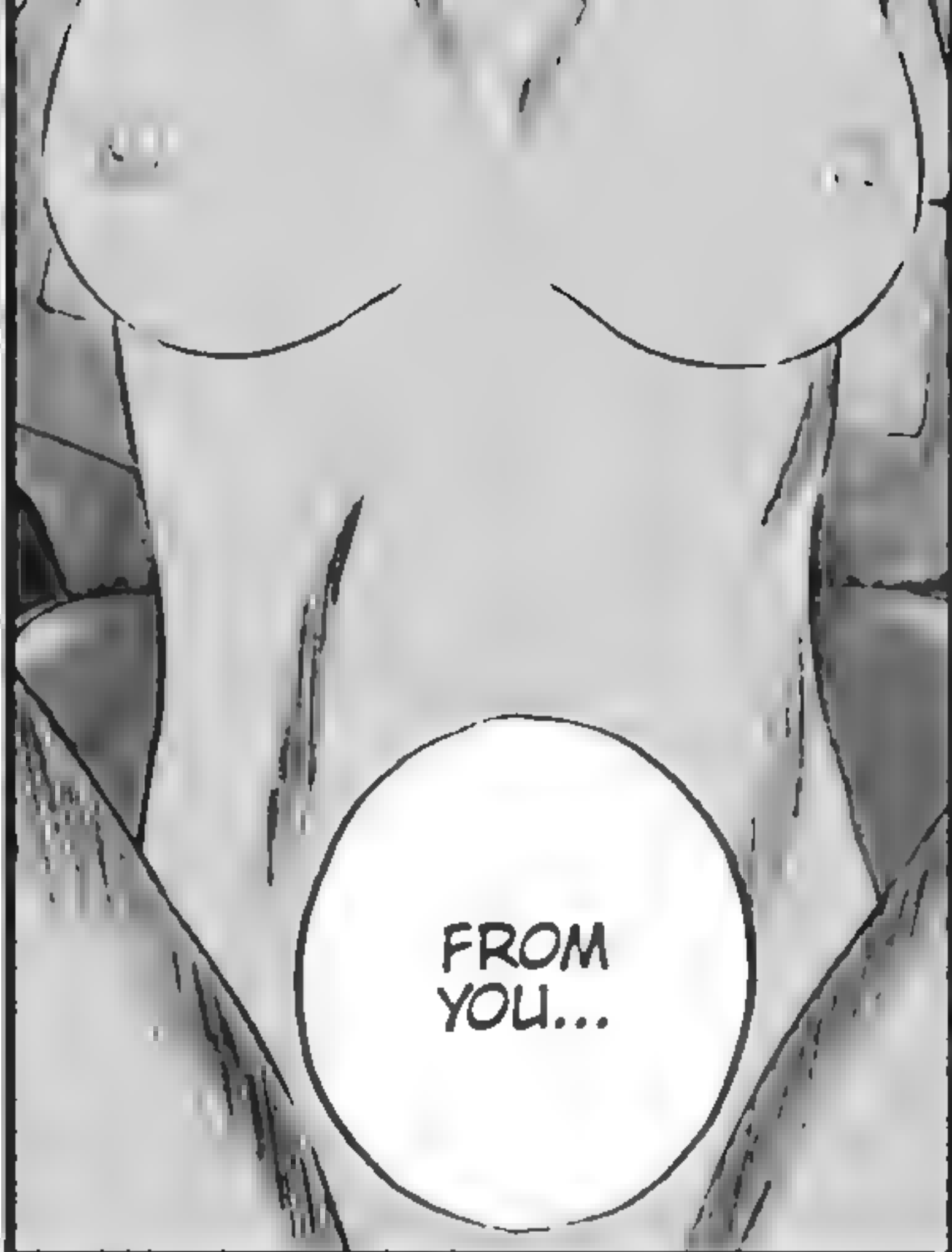


I HAD
TO ESCAPE
FROM THAT
VERSION OF
MYSELF.

UP UNTIL
THAT POINT,
MY EXISTENCE
WAS NOTHING.



FROM THE
BABY...



FROM
YOU...



FROM MY
FACE...



I HAD TO
THROW AWAY
EVERYTHING!



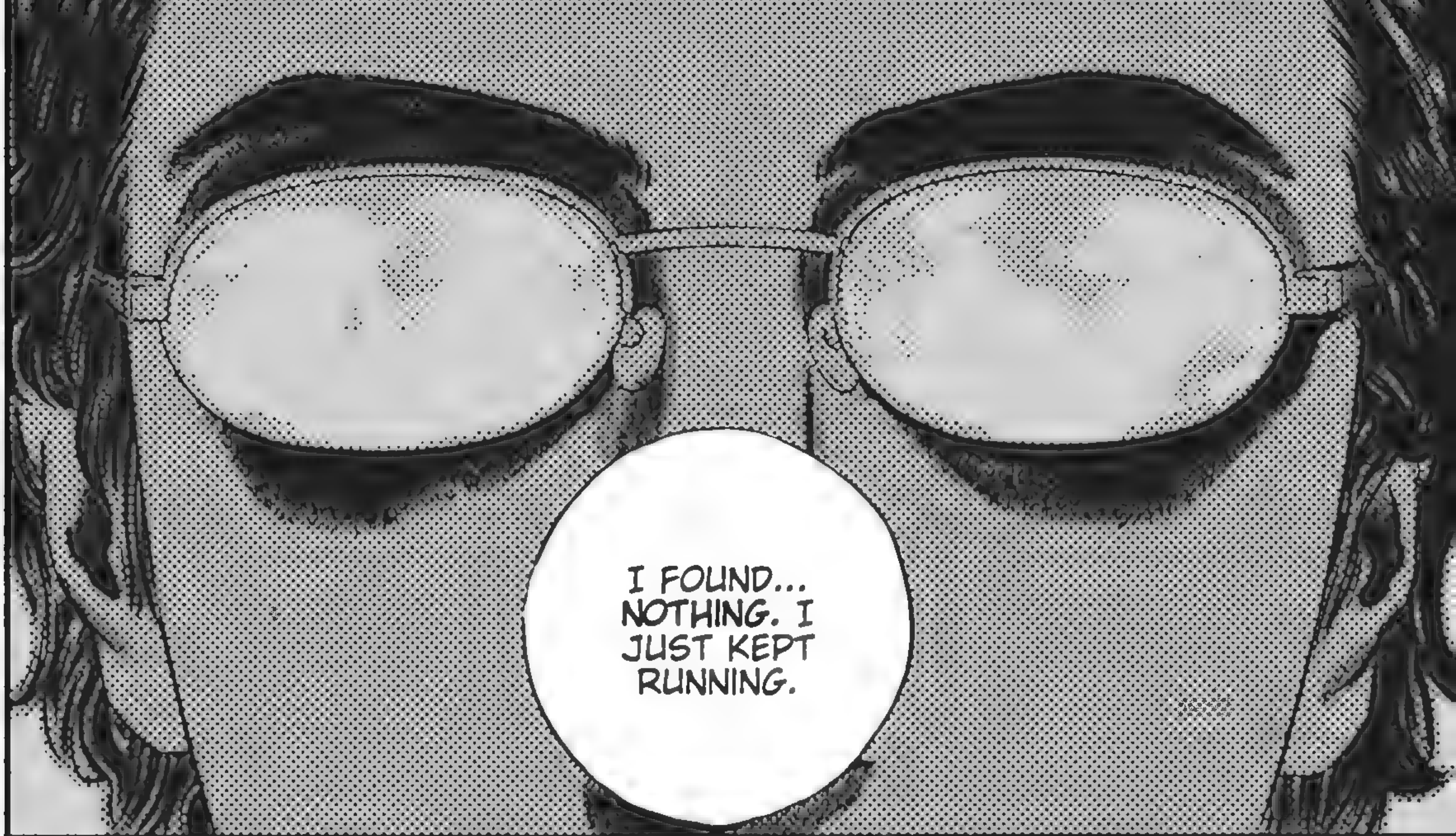
SO? AFTER
YOU RAN...
WHAT'D YOU
FIND?



AFTER I
RAN?



.....



I FOUND...
NOTHING. I
JUST KEPT
RUNNING.



NO CLUE
WHERE I
COULD GO...

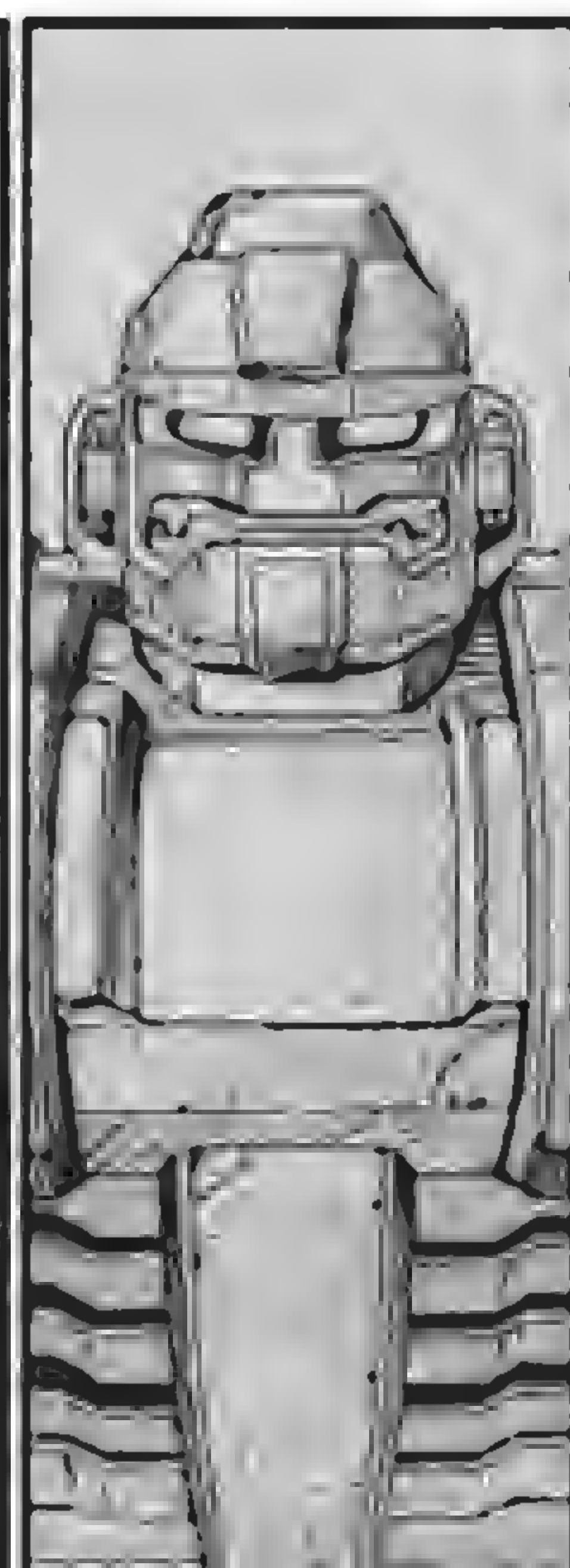


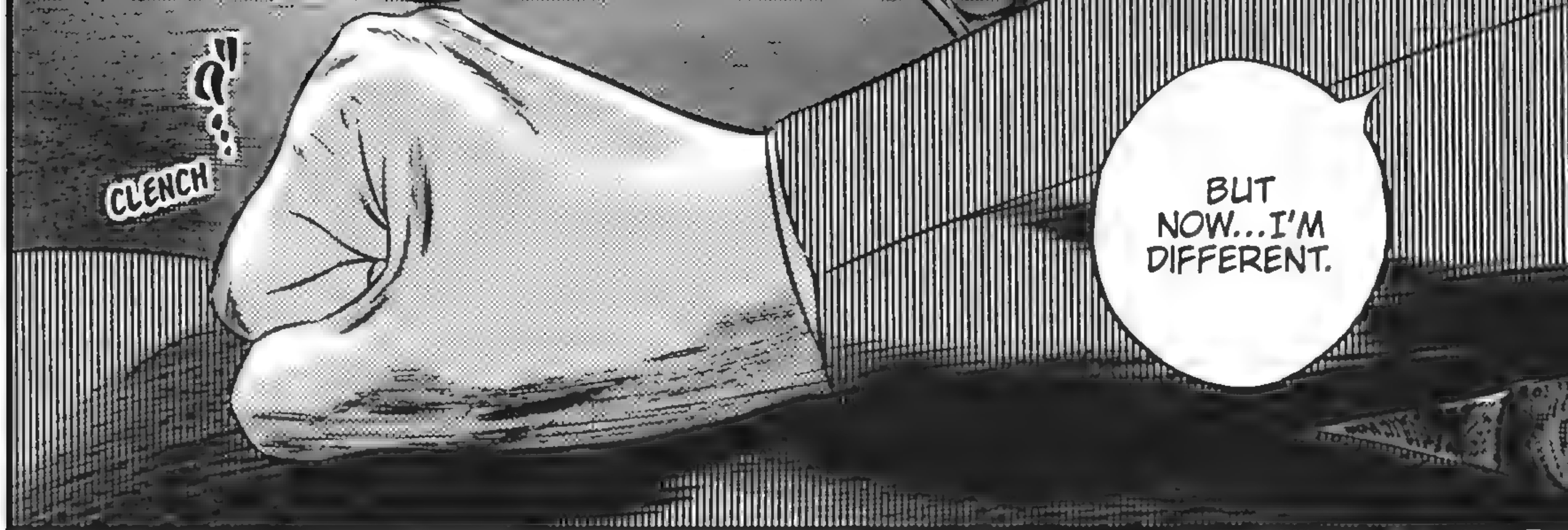
I
JUST...

LOOKED
FOR ESCAPE
ROUTE AFTER
ESCAPE
ROUTE.



WITH
NO CLUE
WHERE I
SHOULD
GO.





CLENCH

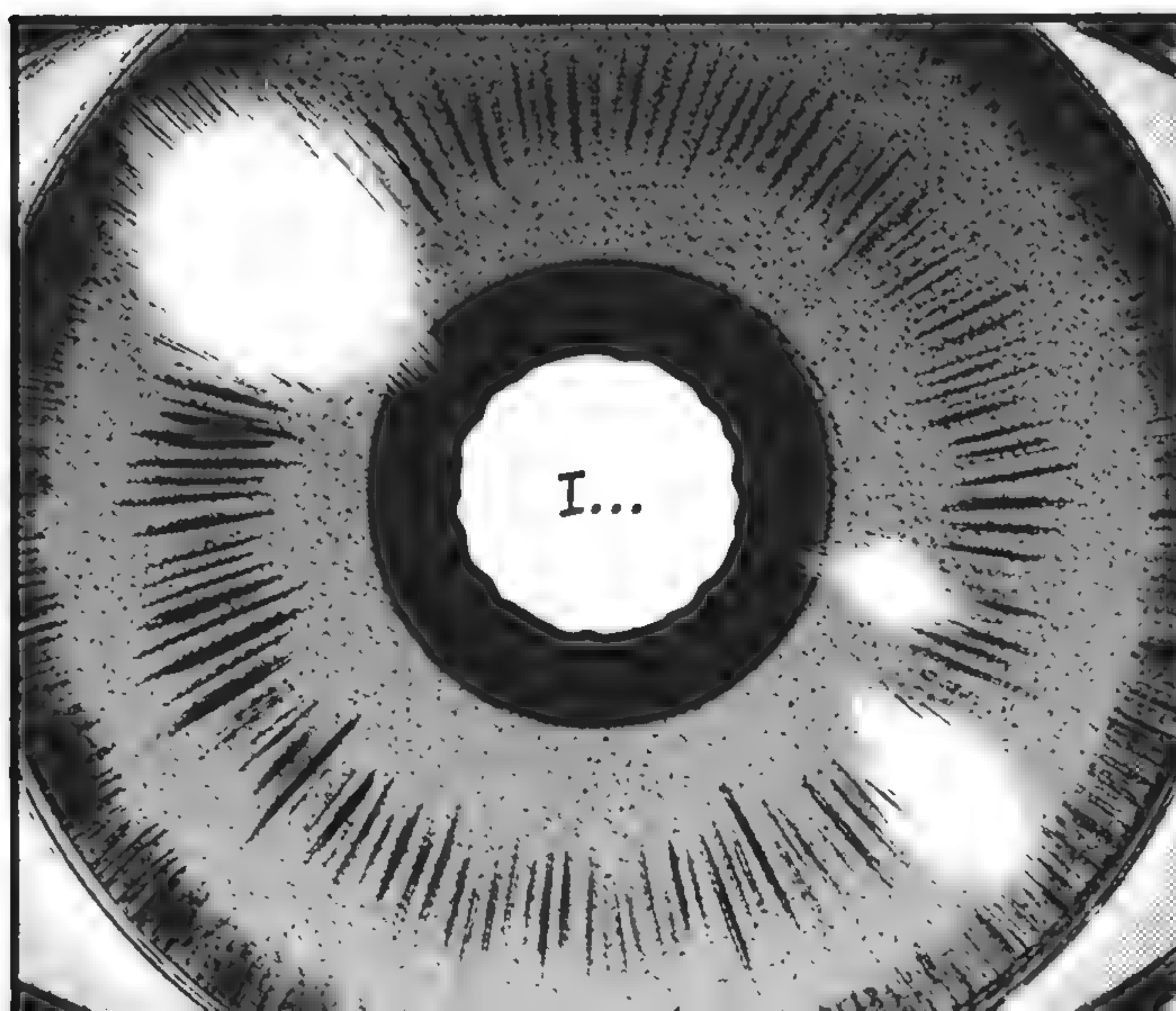
BUT
NOW...I'M
DIFFERENT.



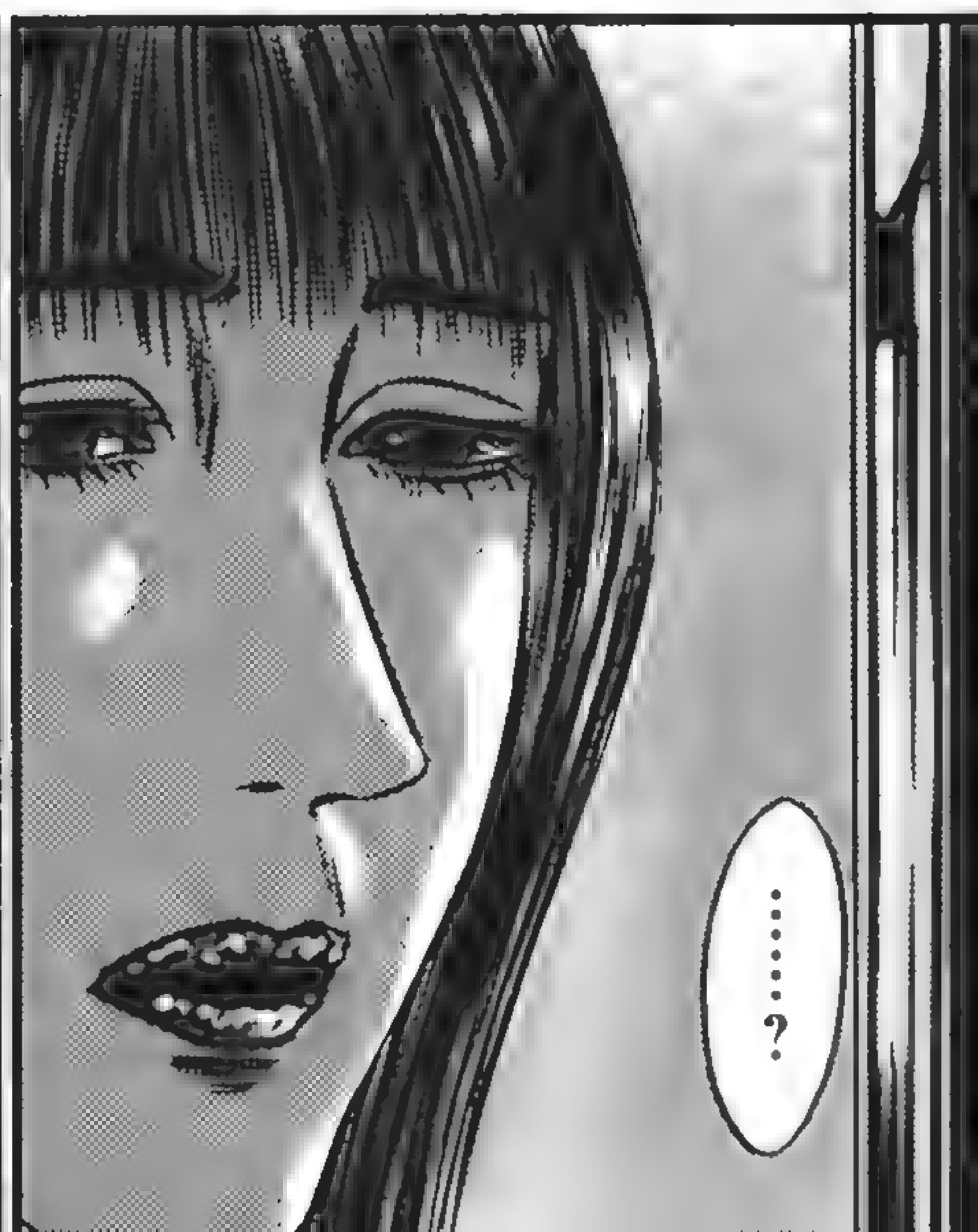
I FINALLY
FOUND...

THE
PLACE I'M
SUPPOSED
TO GO.

!



I...



.....
?



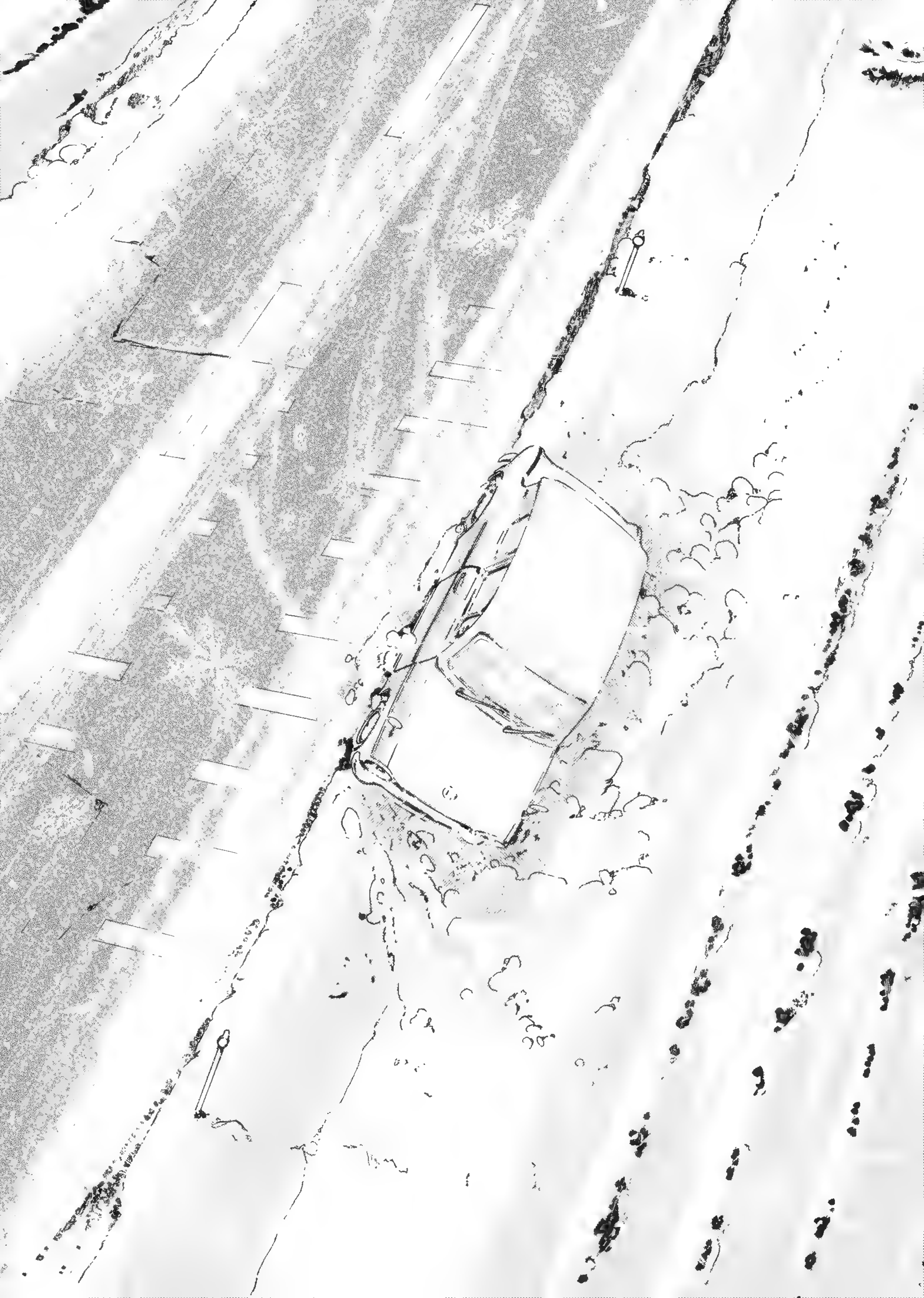


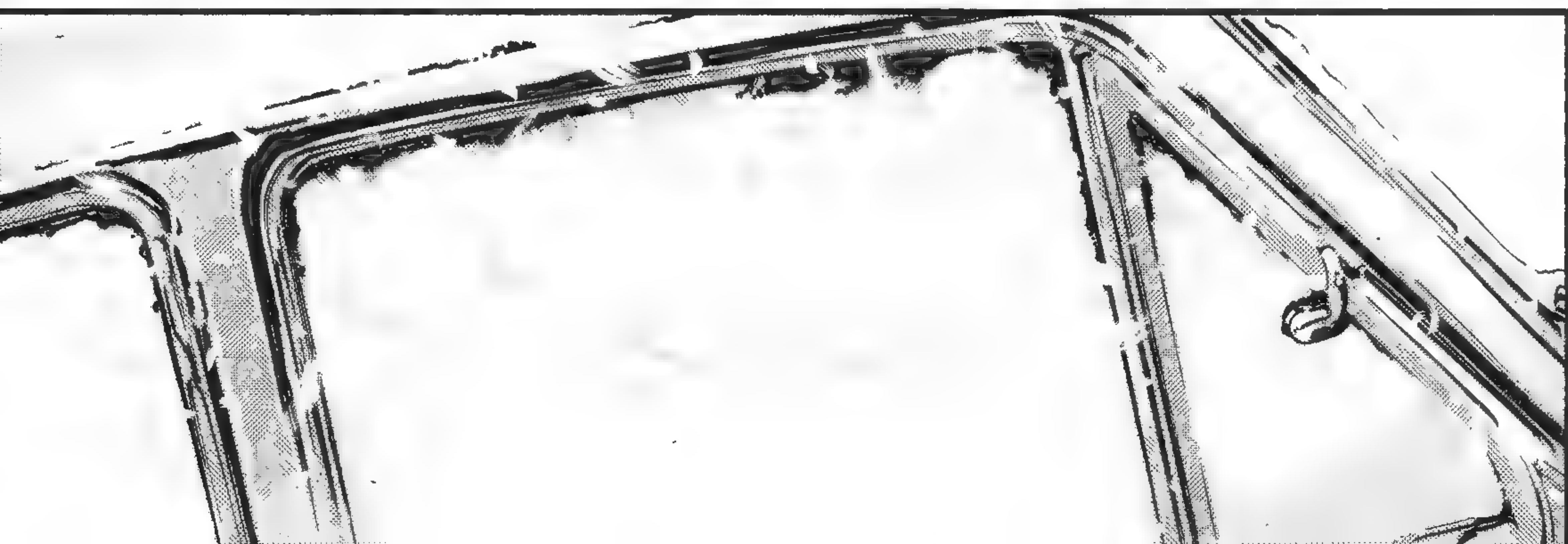
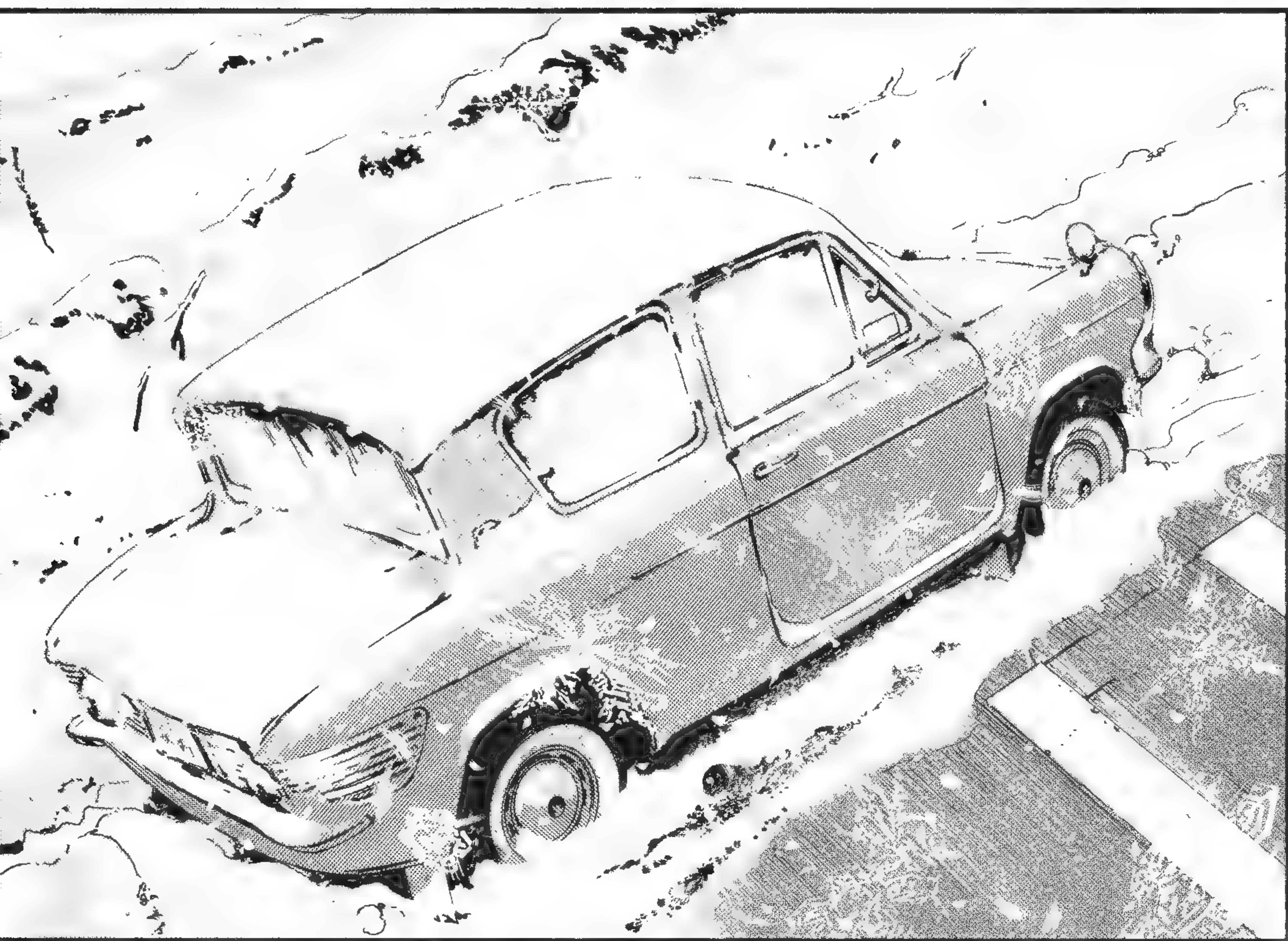
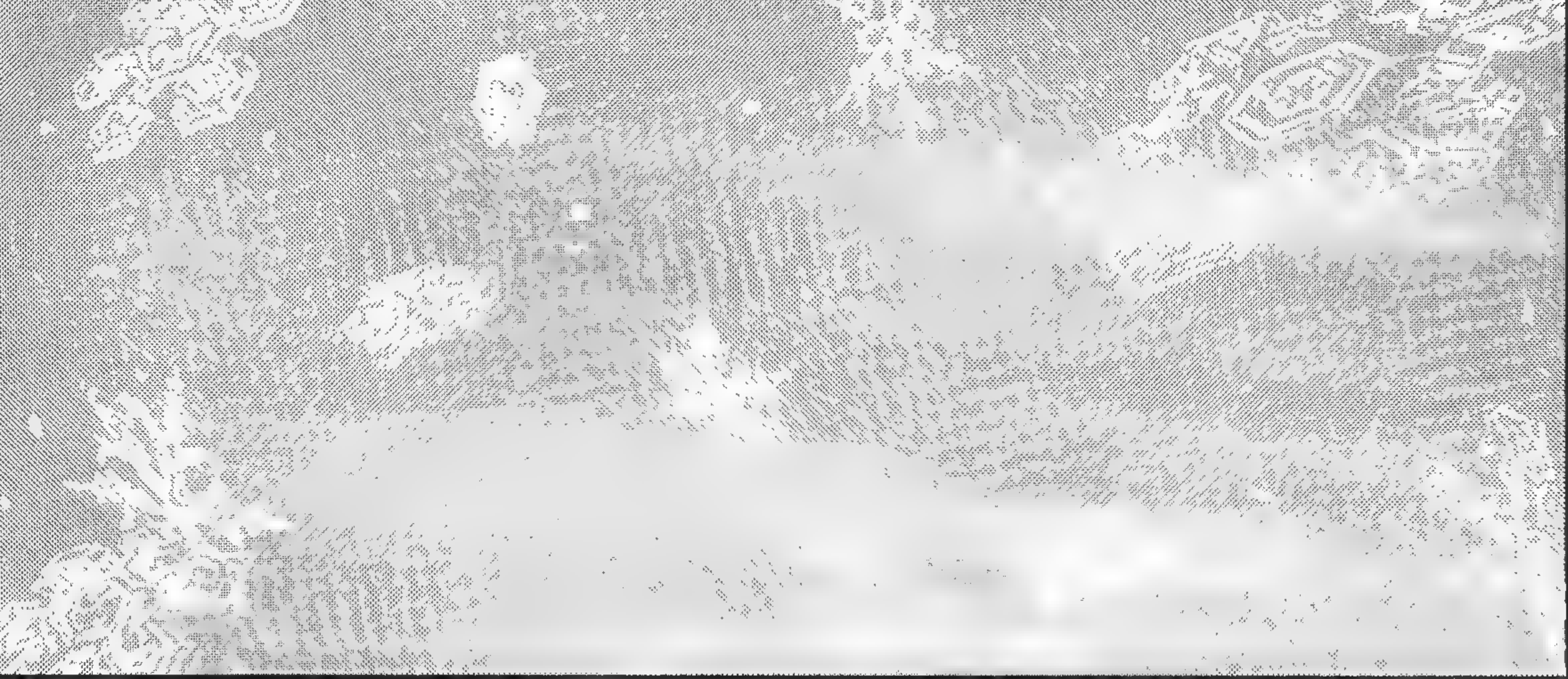
I WILL
ALWAYS
LOOK AT
YOUR SOUL.
I SWEAR.

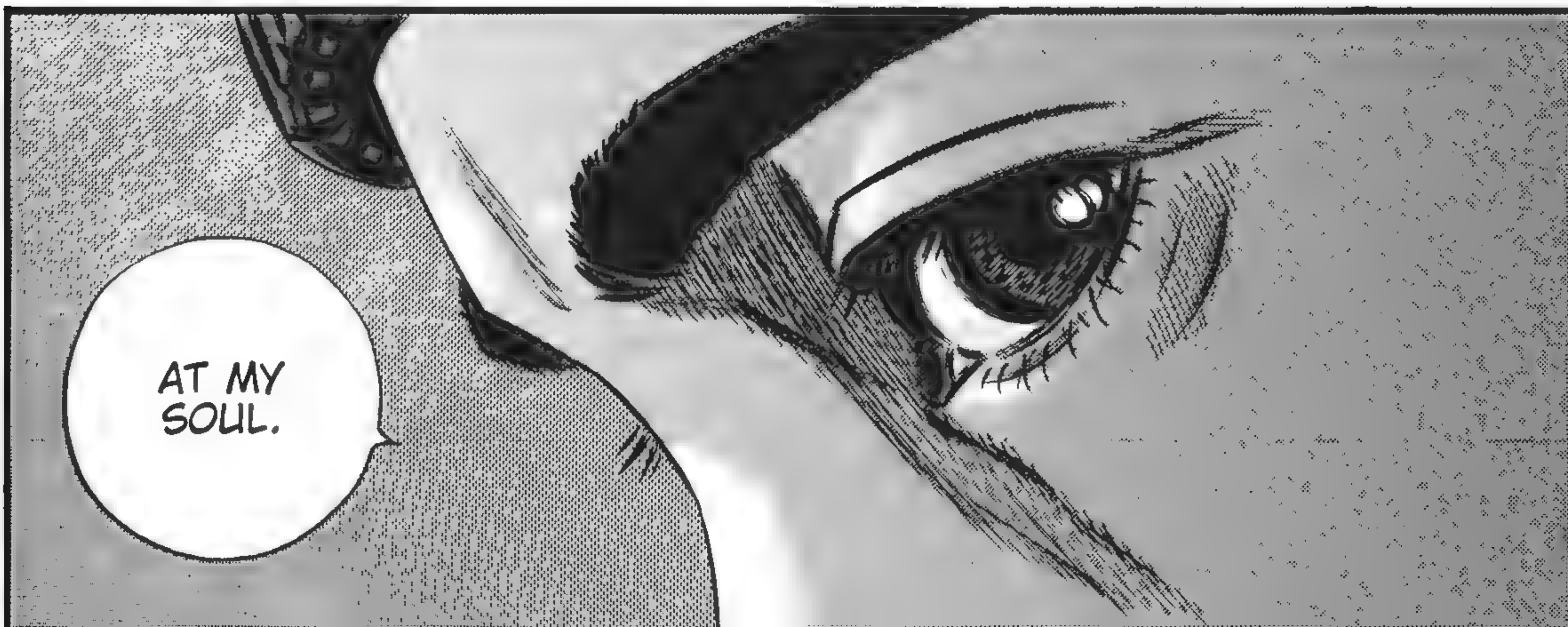
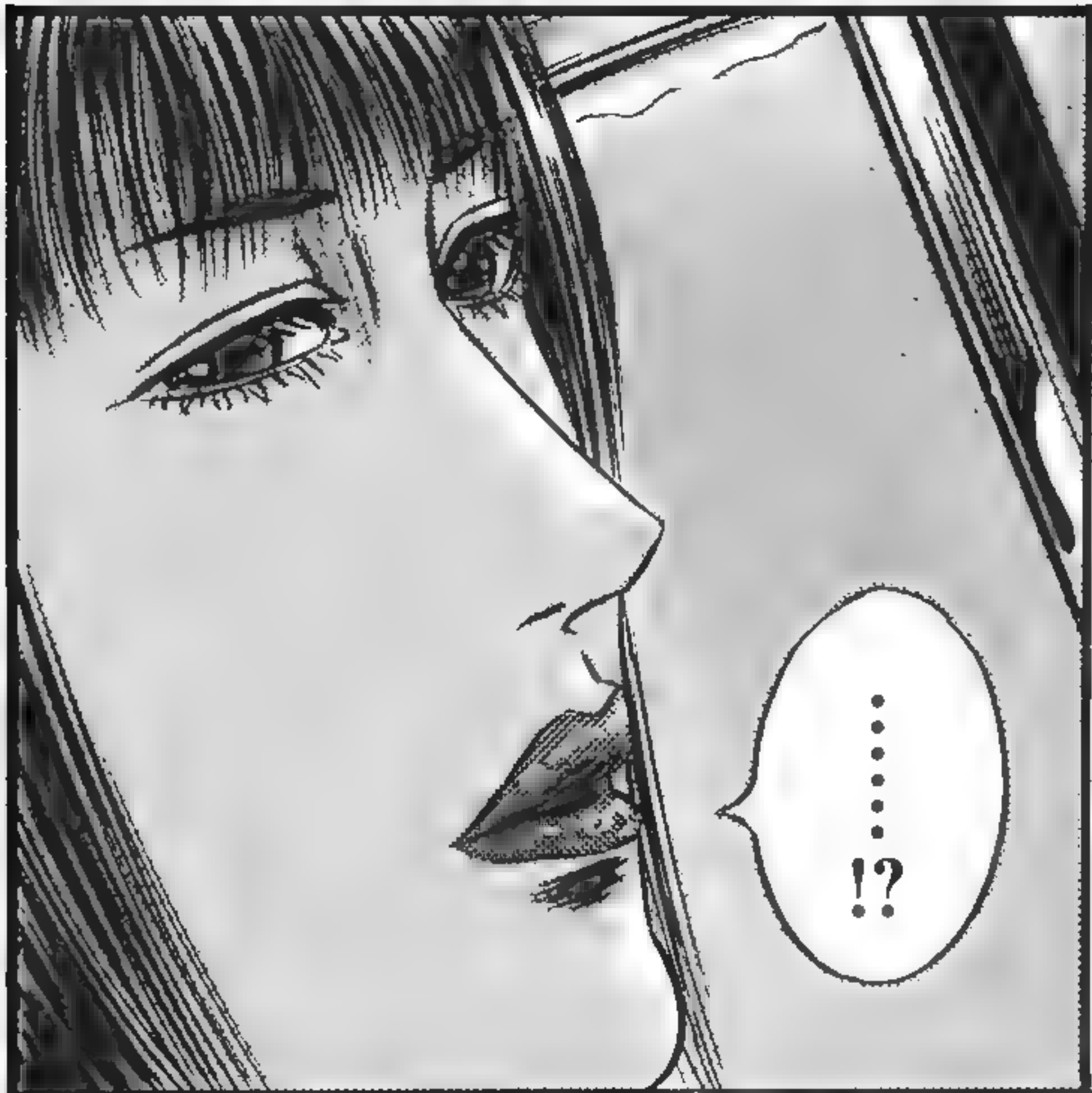
FROM
NOW
ON...













NO...IT'S
TOO LATE
FOR ME. I'VE
FORGOTTEN
HOW TO SEE
PEOPLE THAT
WAY.

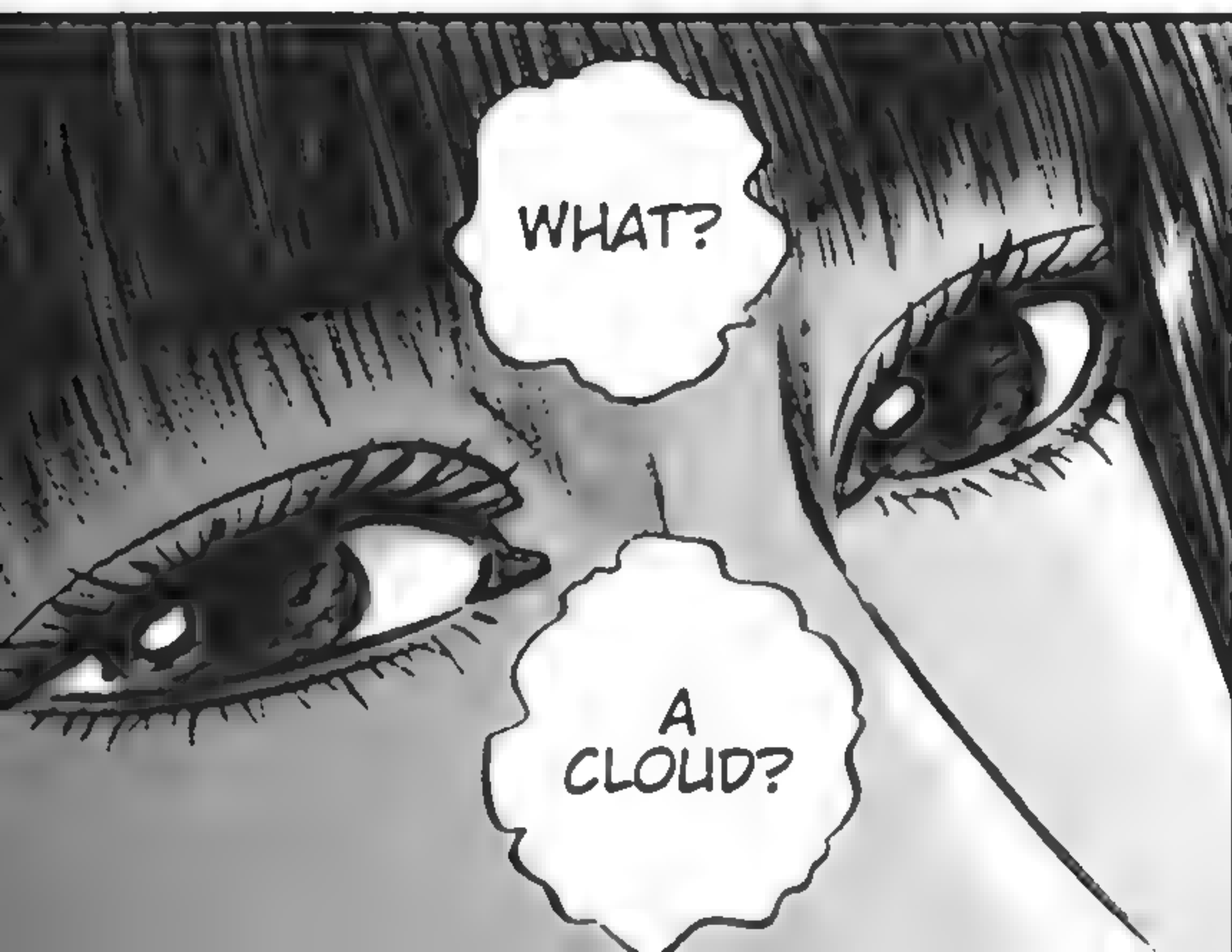


ME...?



MAYBE YOU
CAN'T SEE IT
RIGHT NOW,
BUT YOU SAW
IT ONCE, DIDN'T
YOU?

THAT'S
NOT
TRUE!



WHAT?

A
CLOUD?

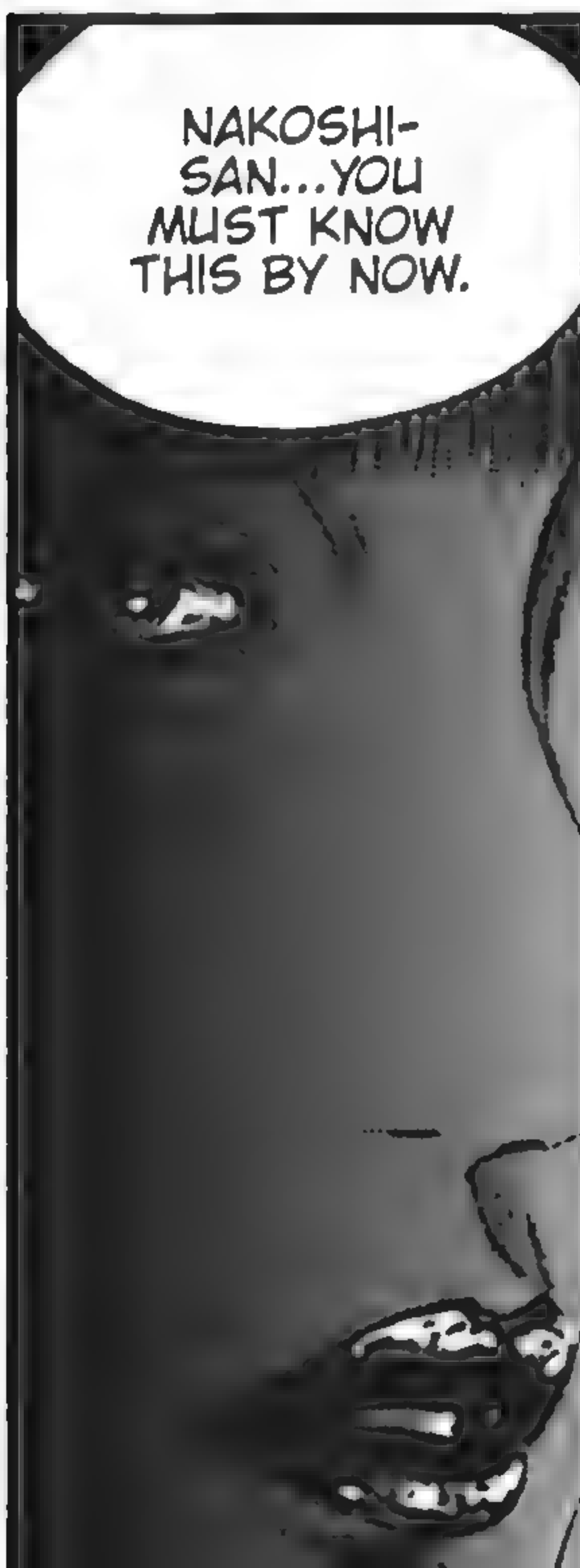


YOU
SAW THE
CLOUD!



YOU
SAID YOU
SAW IT,
NANAKO!

MY CLOUD!
REMEMBER?
PURE
WHITE AND
INNOCENT?



NAKOSHI-
SAN...YOU
MUST KNOW
THIS BY NOW.

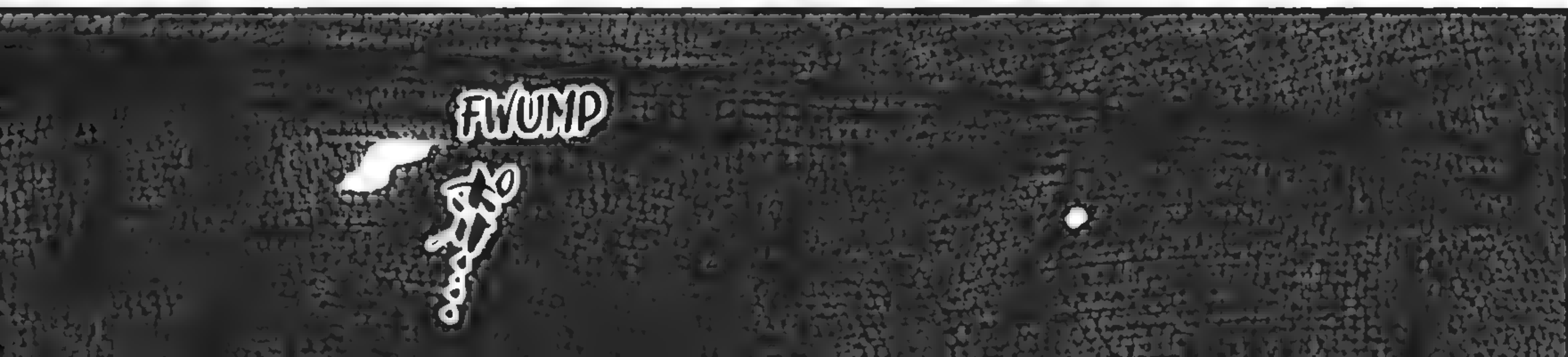
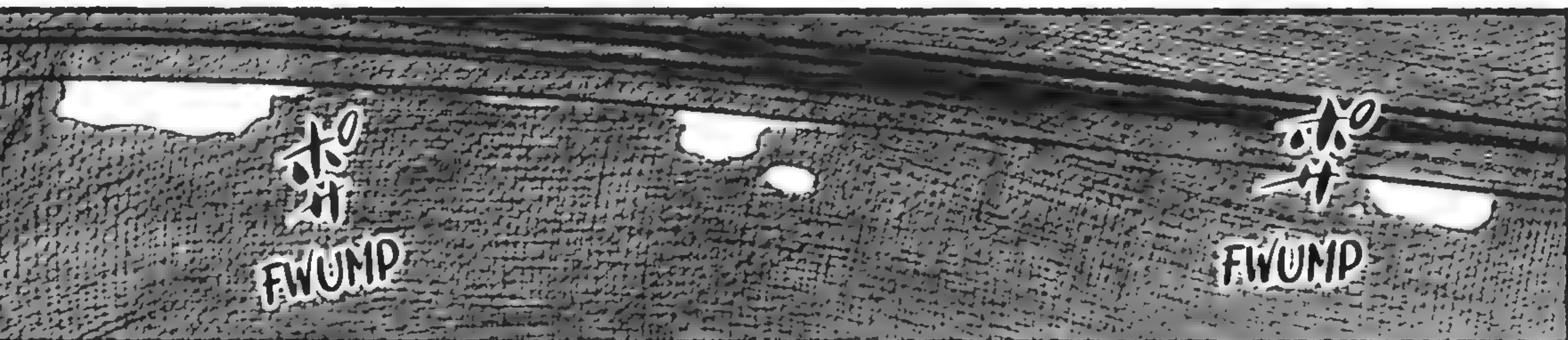


DON'T
WORRY!

I'M SURE
YOU'LL SEE
IT AGAIN.

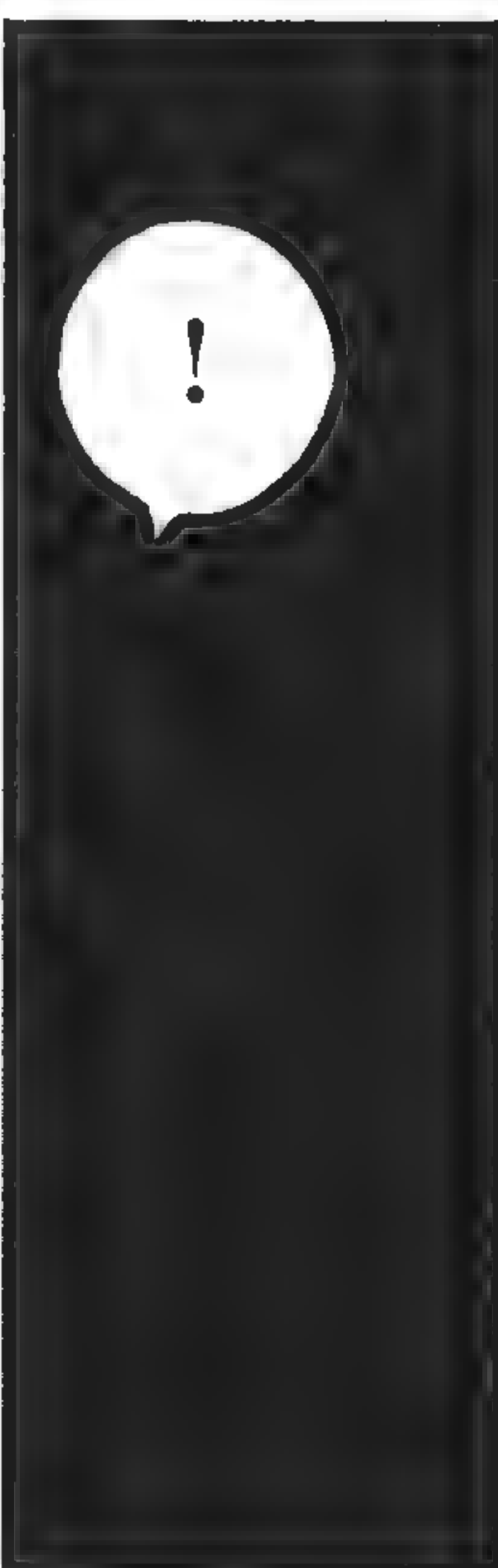
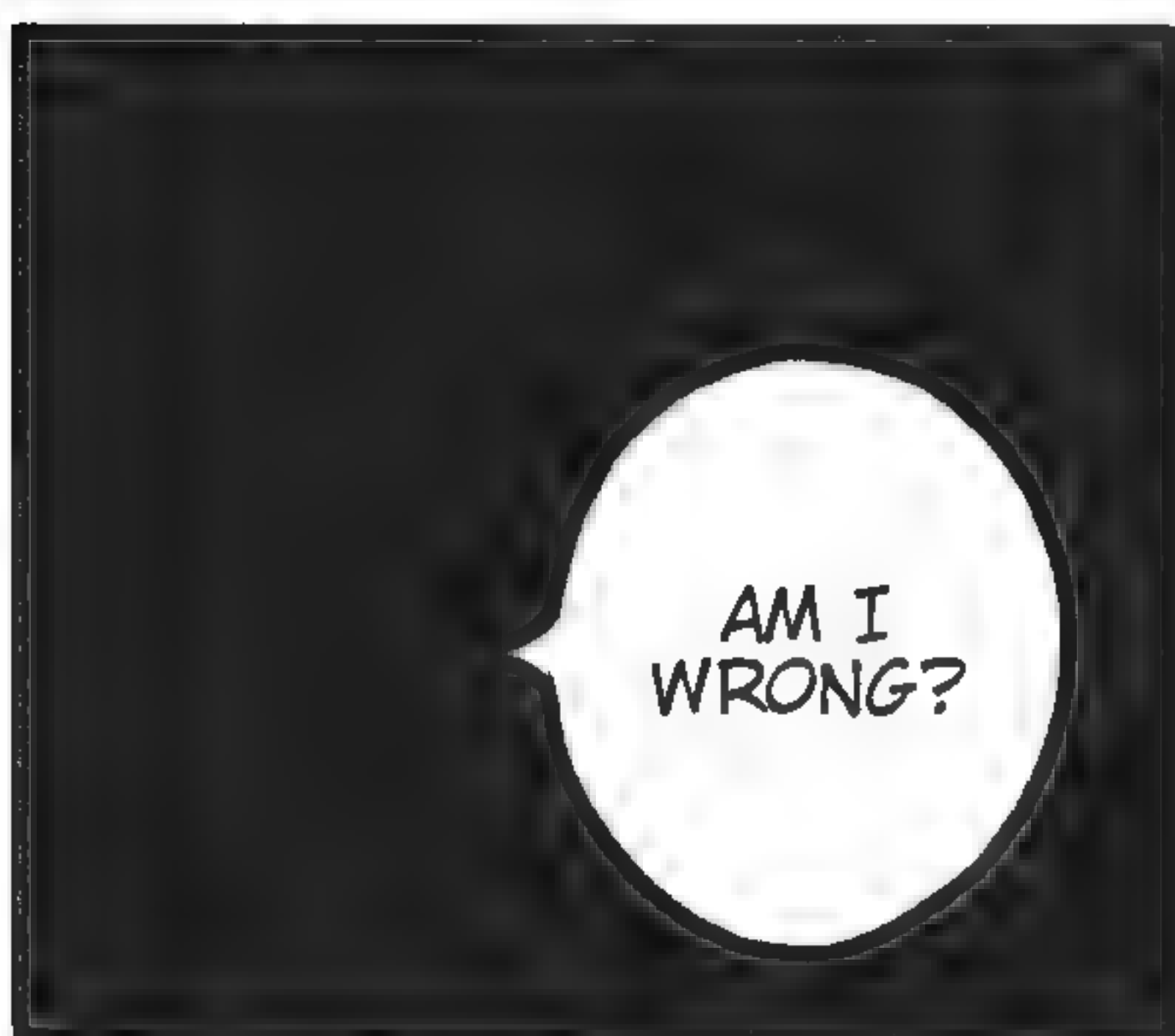
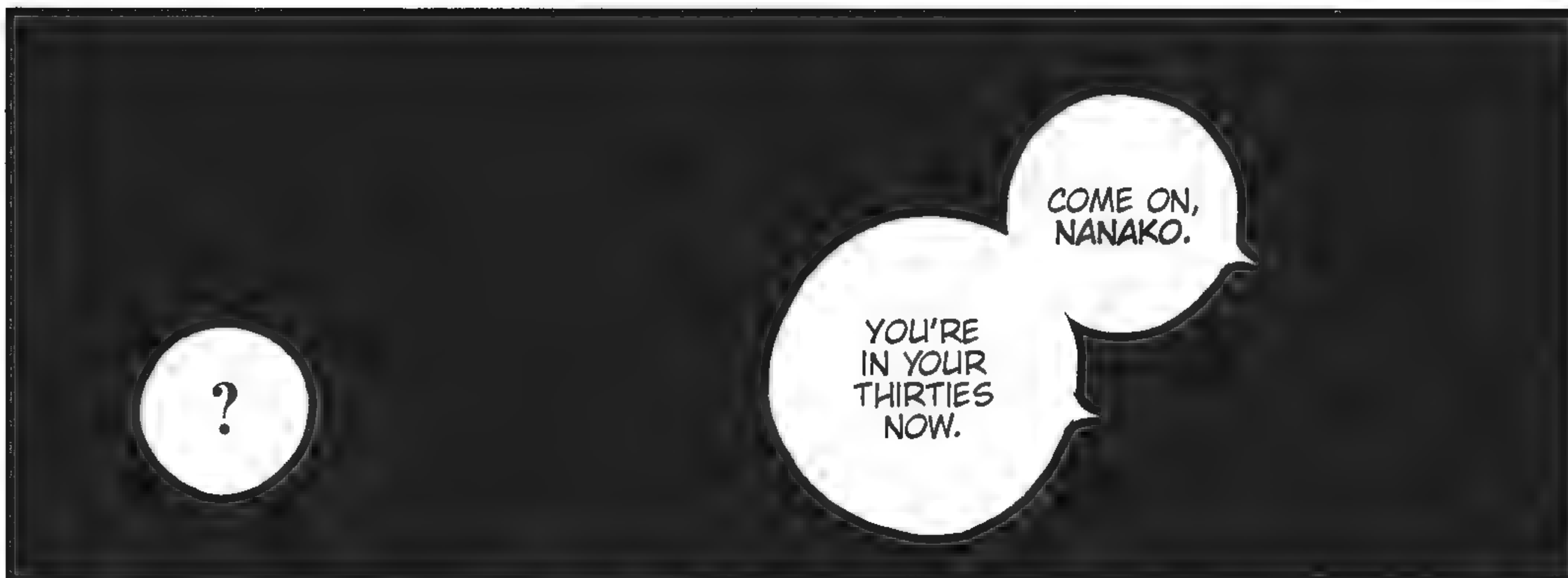


.....









GO
P
OO

!

AFTER THE
LIFE YOU'VE LED,
WHO'S GONNA
WANT TO SEE
YOUR SOUL
NOW?

BUT
NEWS
FLASH!
NO ONE
CARES!

IF NO ONE
SEES HER BODY
OR HER SOUL,
DOES SHE EVEN
REALLY EXIST?
HUH?

POOR
LITTLE
NANAKO.

WHATEVER
WILL SHE
DO, HM?

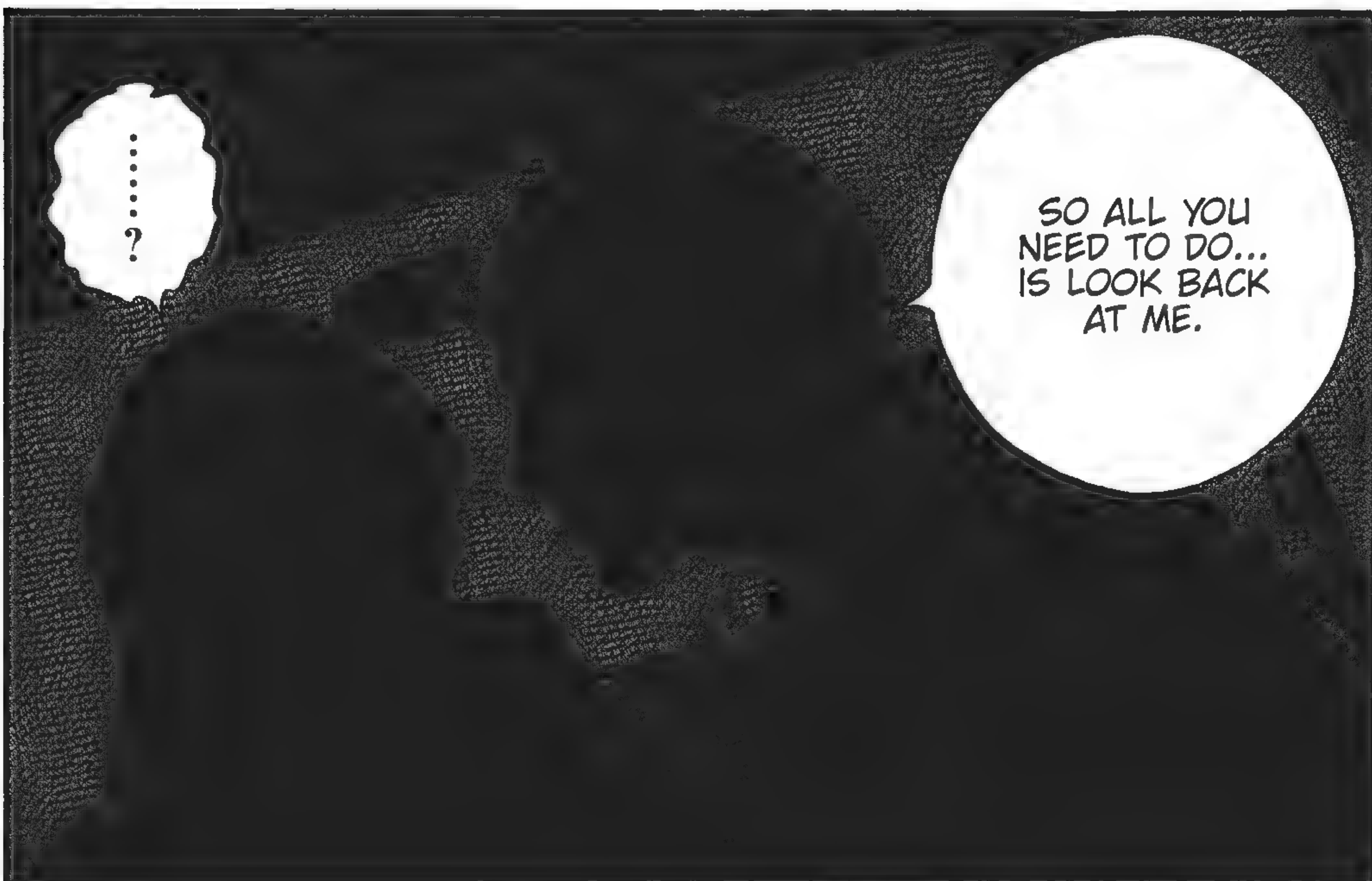
DOES
SHE??

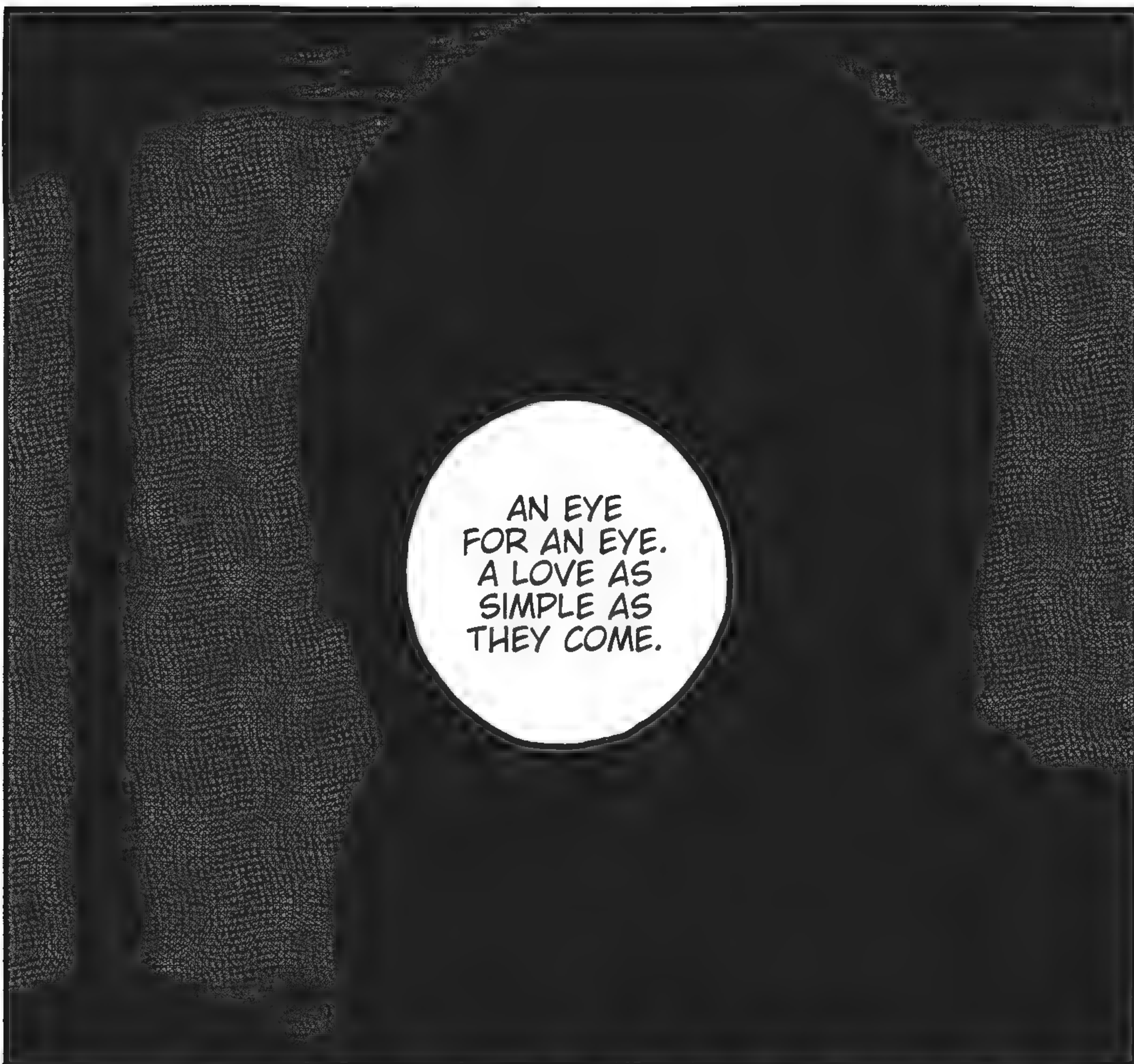
!!

WELL?!
HOW WILL
YOU LIVE,
NANAKO?!

I'LL
TELL YOU.
YOU WON'T.
YOU'LL DIE
ALONE AND
SAD.

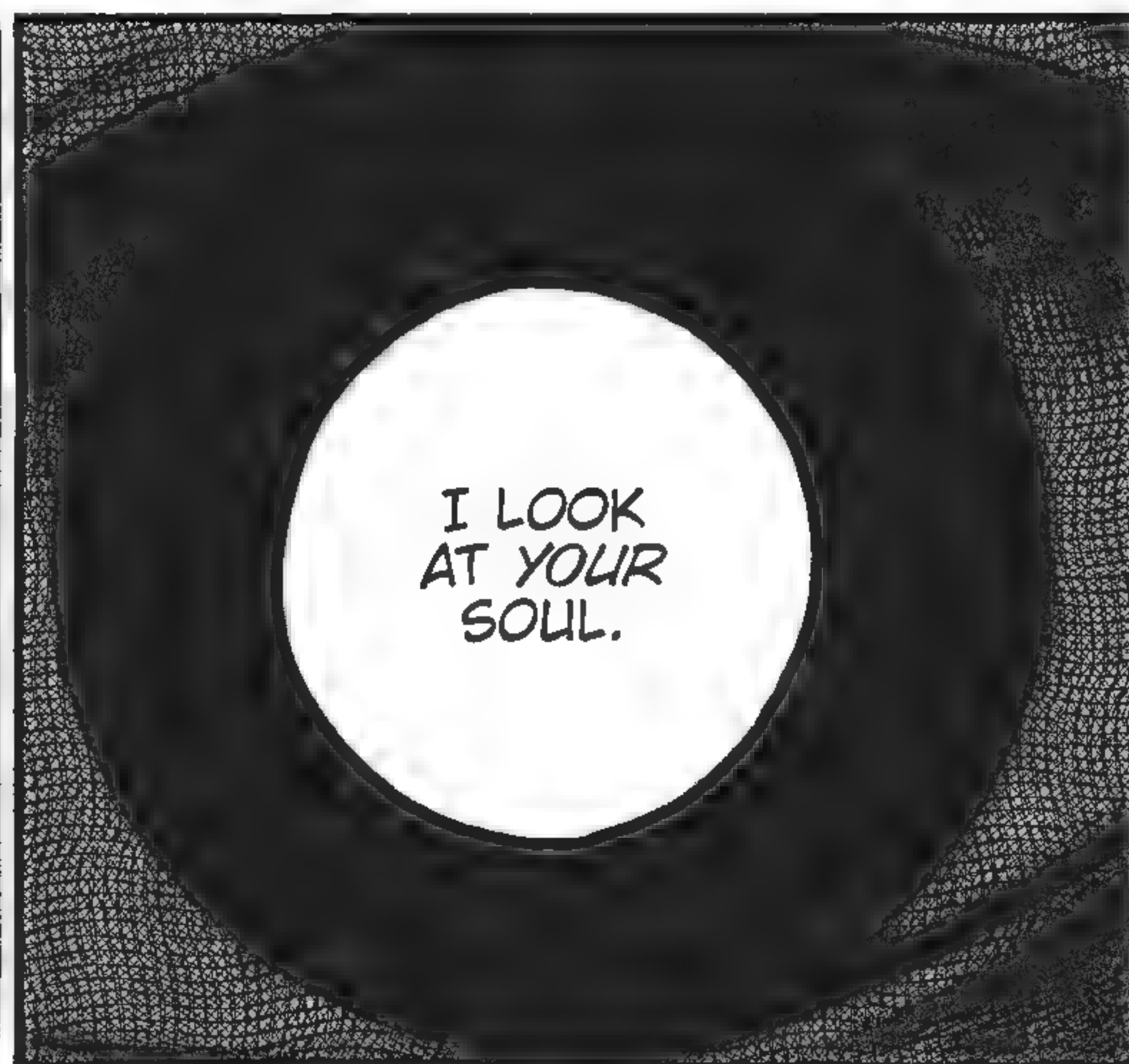
.....







YOU
LOOK AT
MY SOUL.



I LOOK
AT YOUR
SOUL.



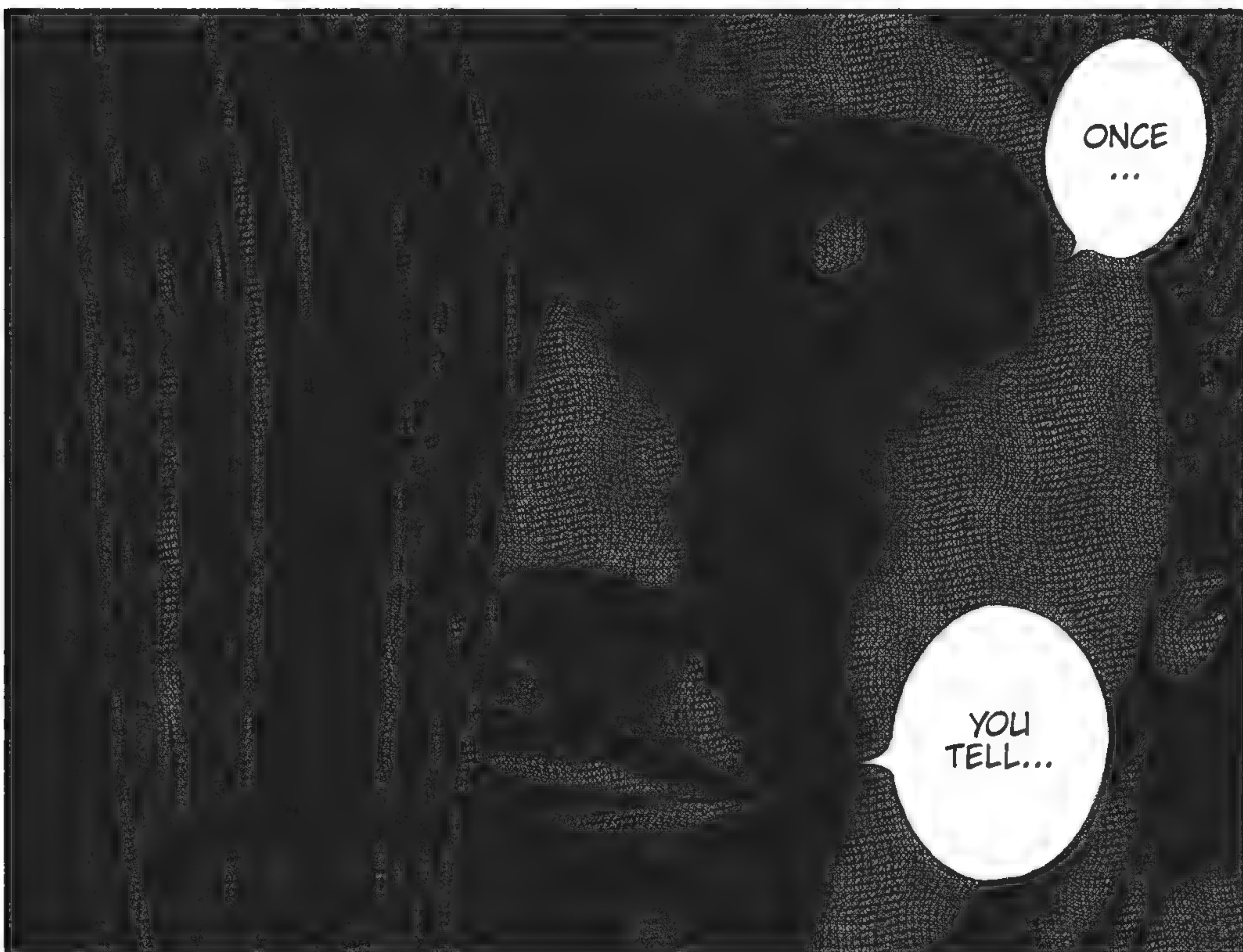
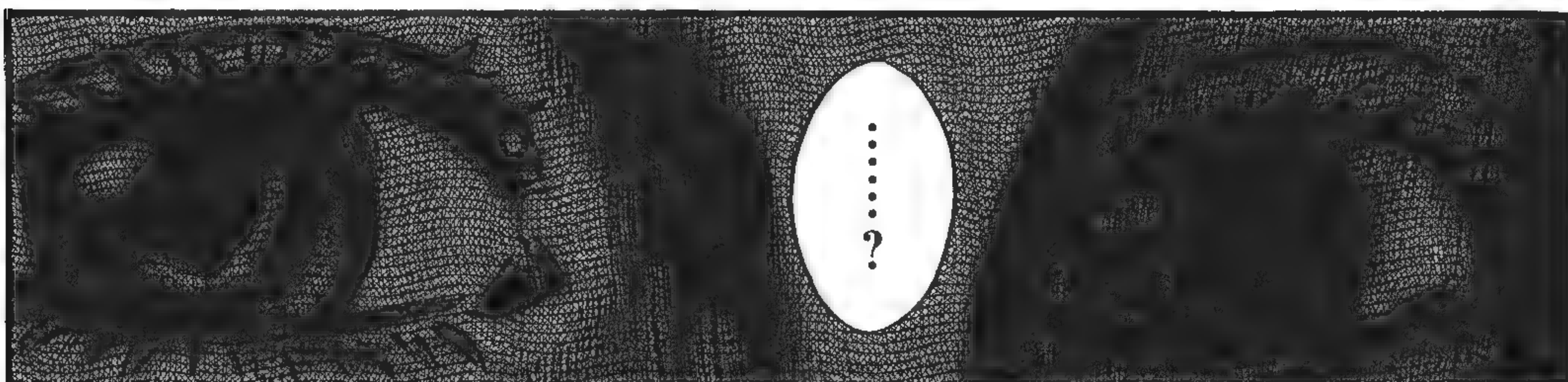
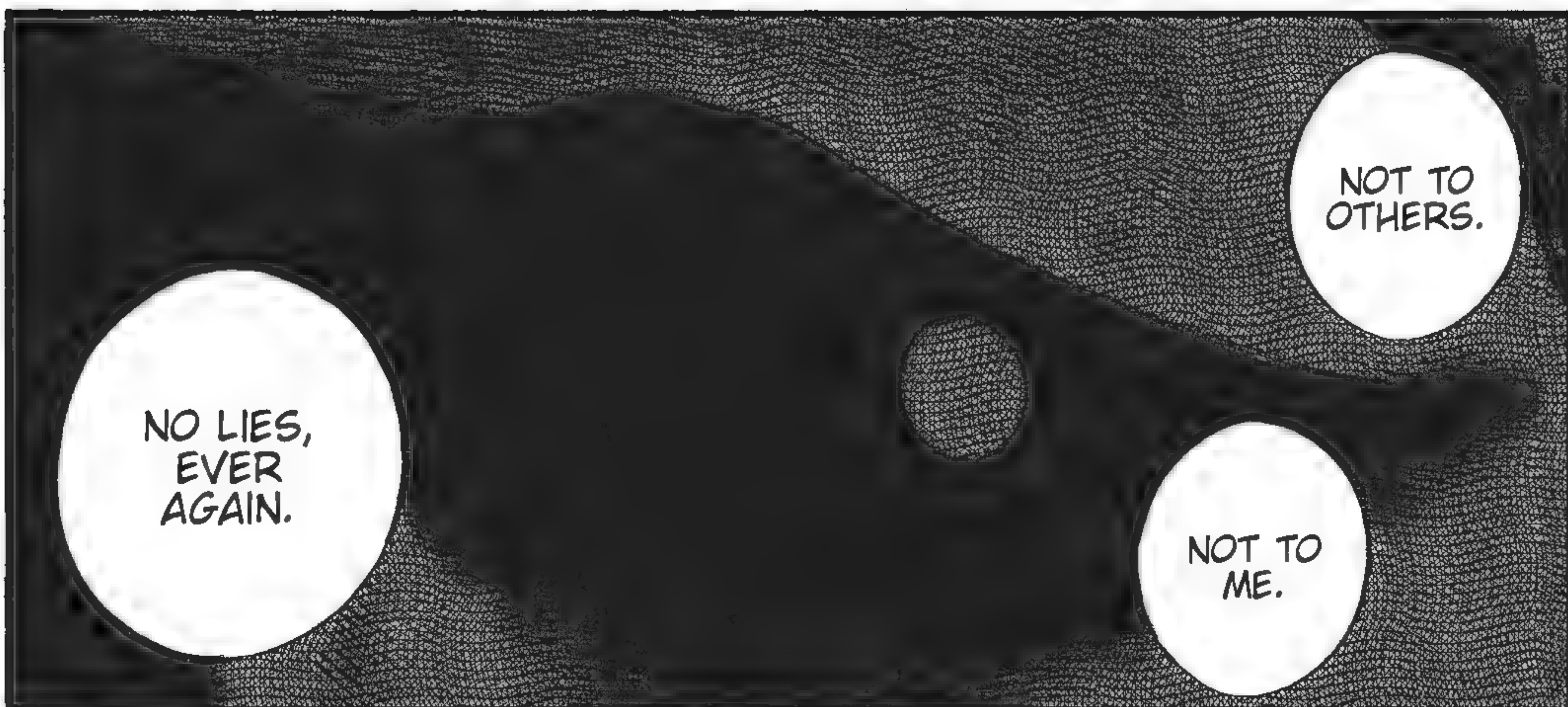
THAT'S ALL
THERE IS
TO IT.

⋮
!!



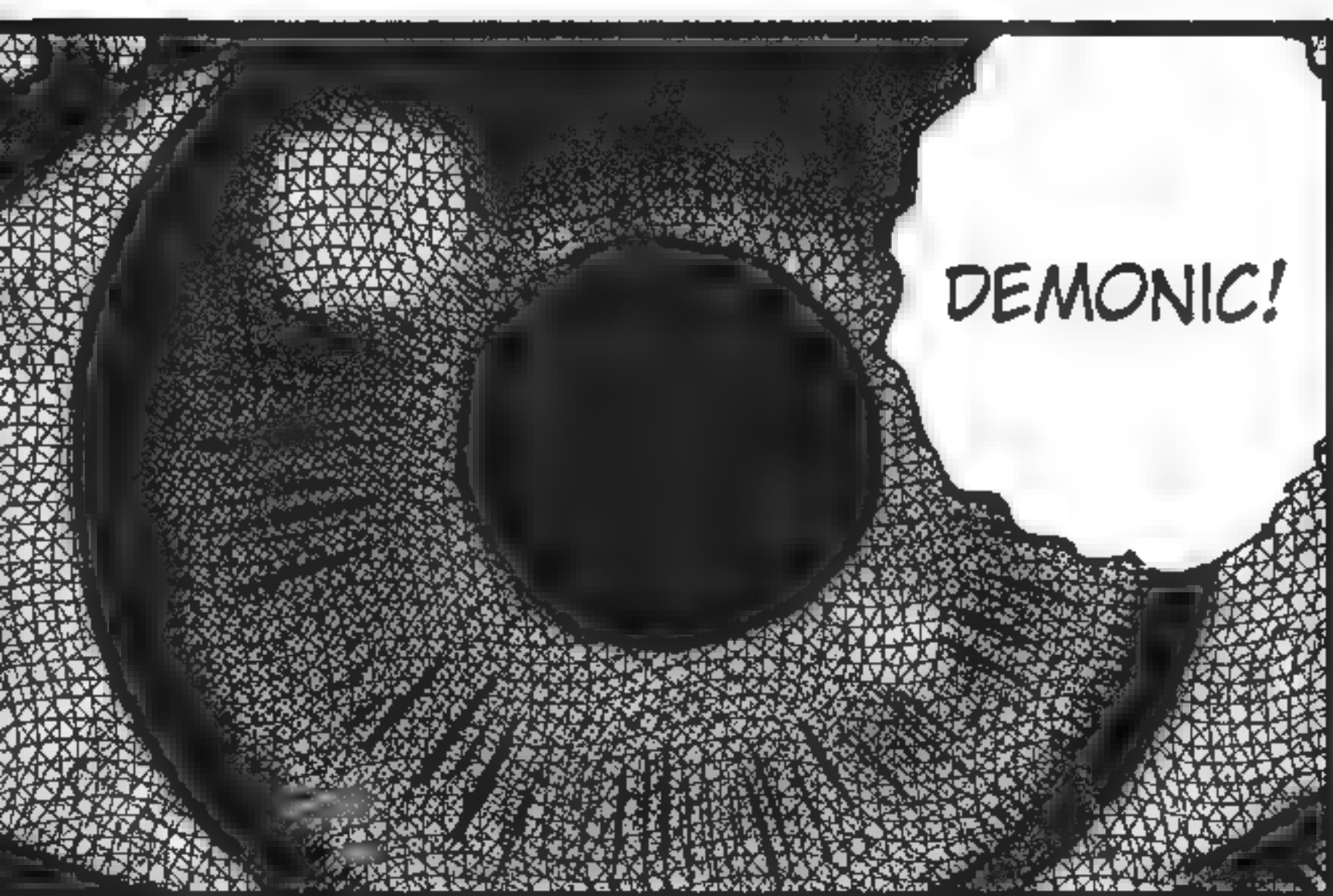
?

ONCE WE'RE
TOGETHER IN
THE WORLD OF
TRUTH, YOU'LL
NEVER HAVE TO
LIE AGAIN.

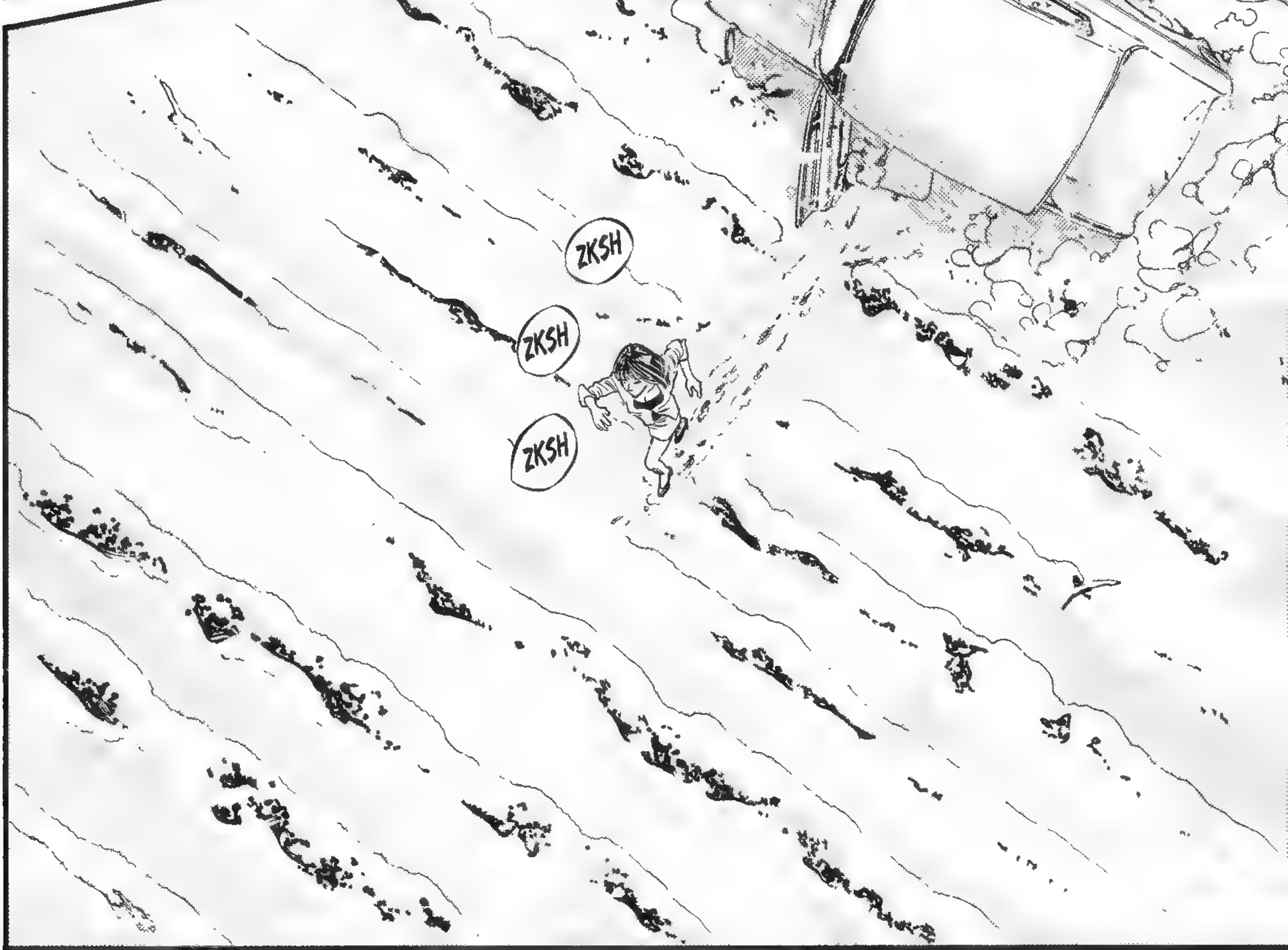


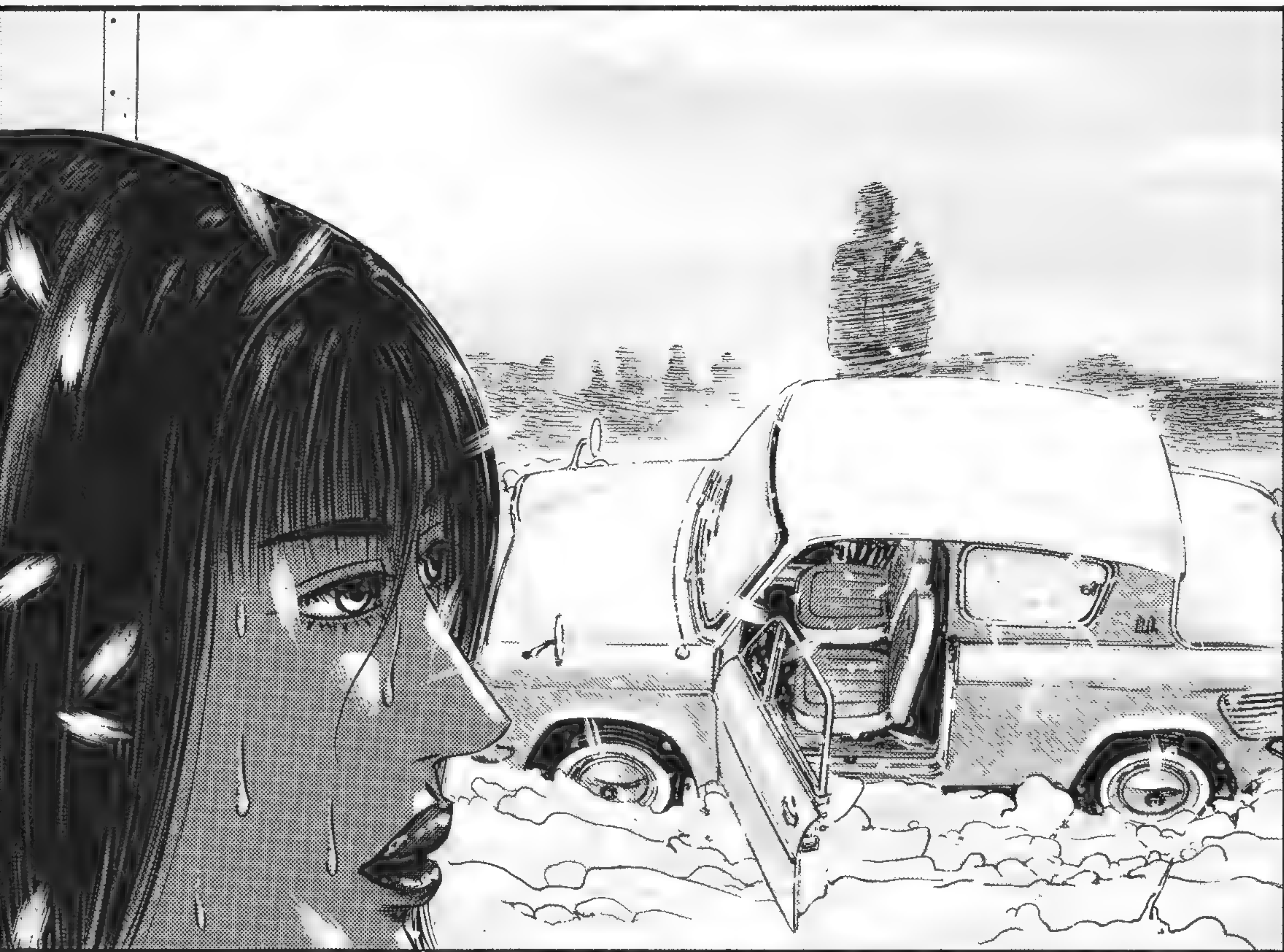


THAT FINAL,
TEENSY
LITTLE LIE TO
YOURSELF.

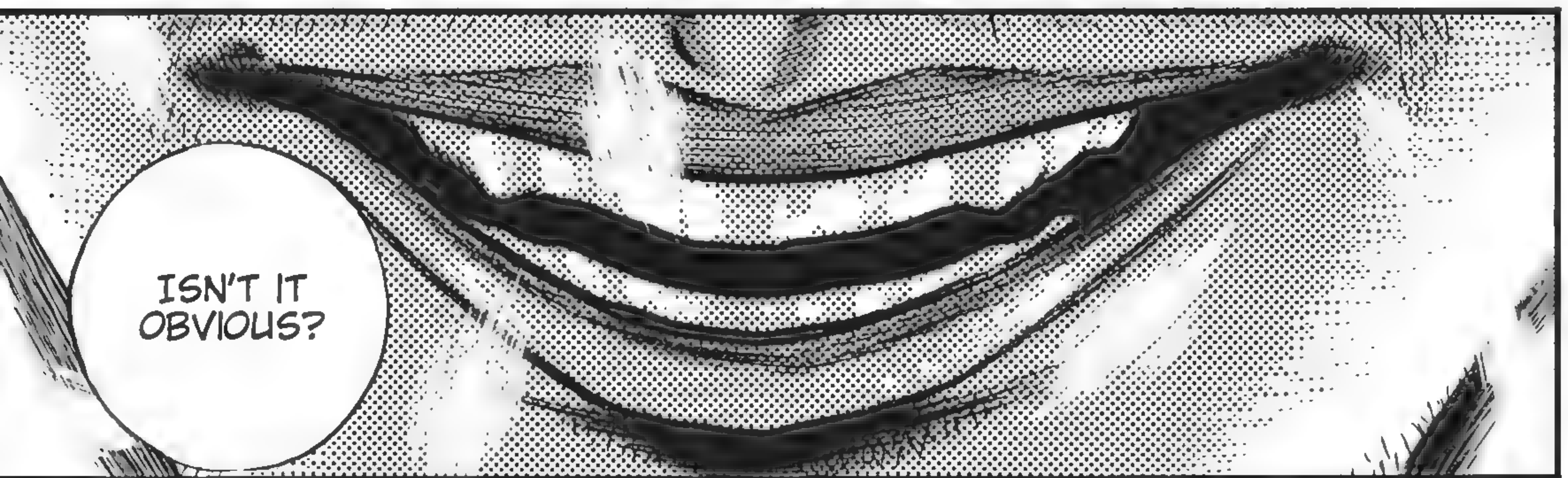
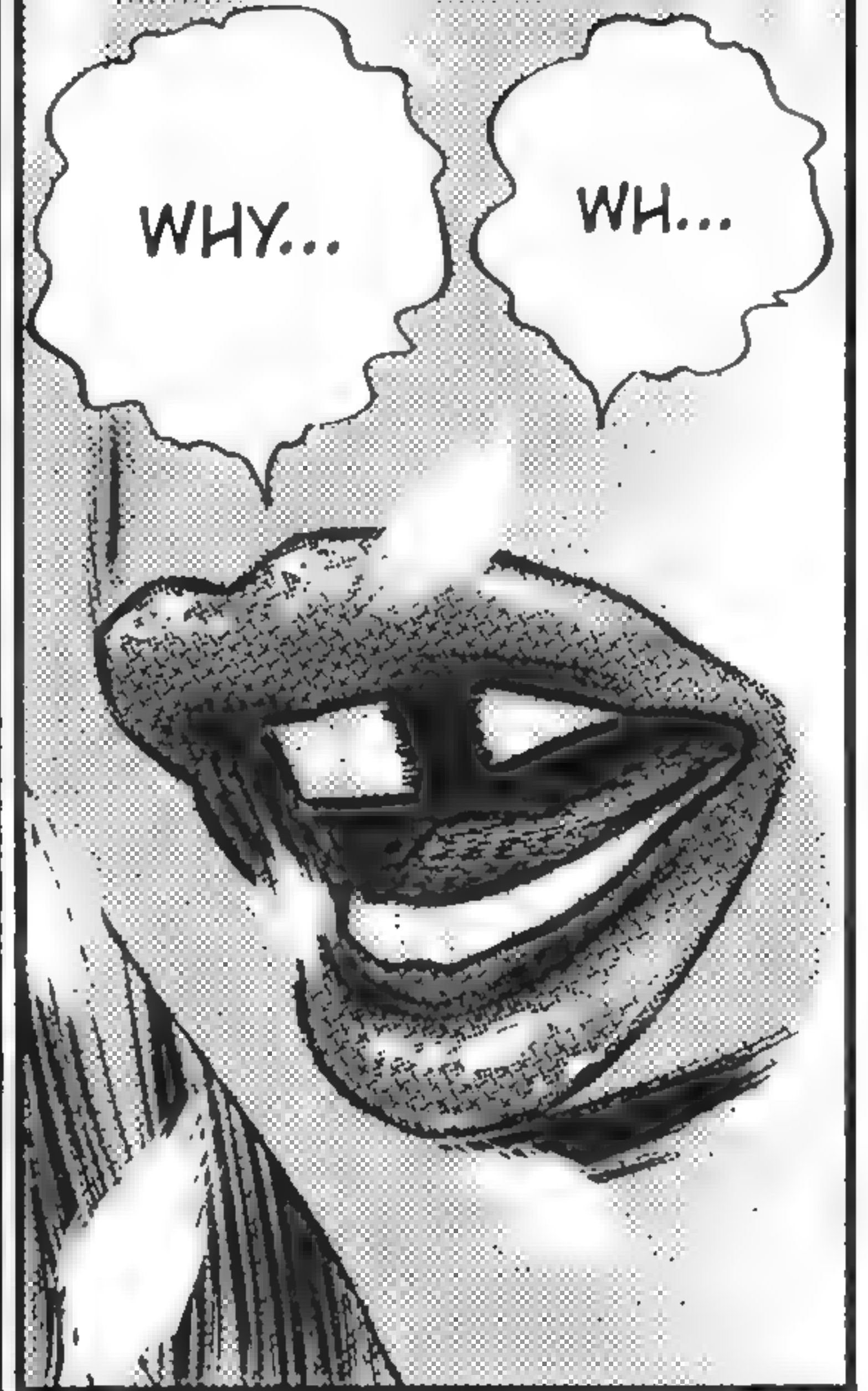














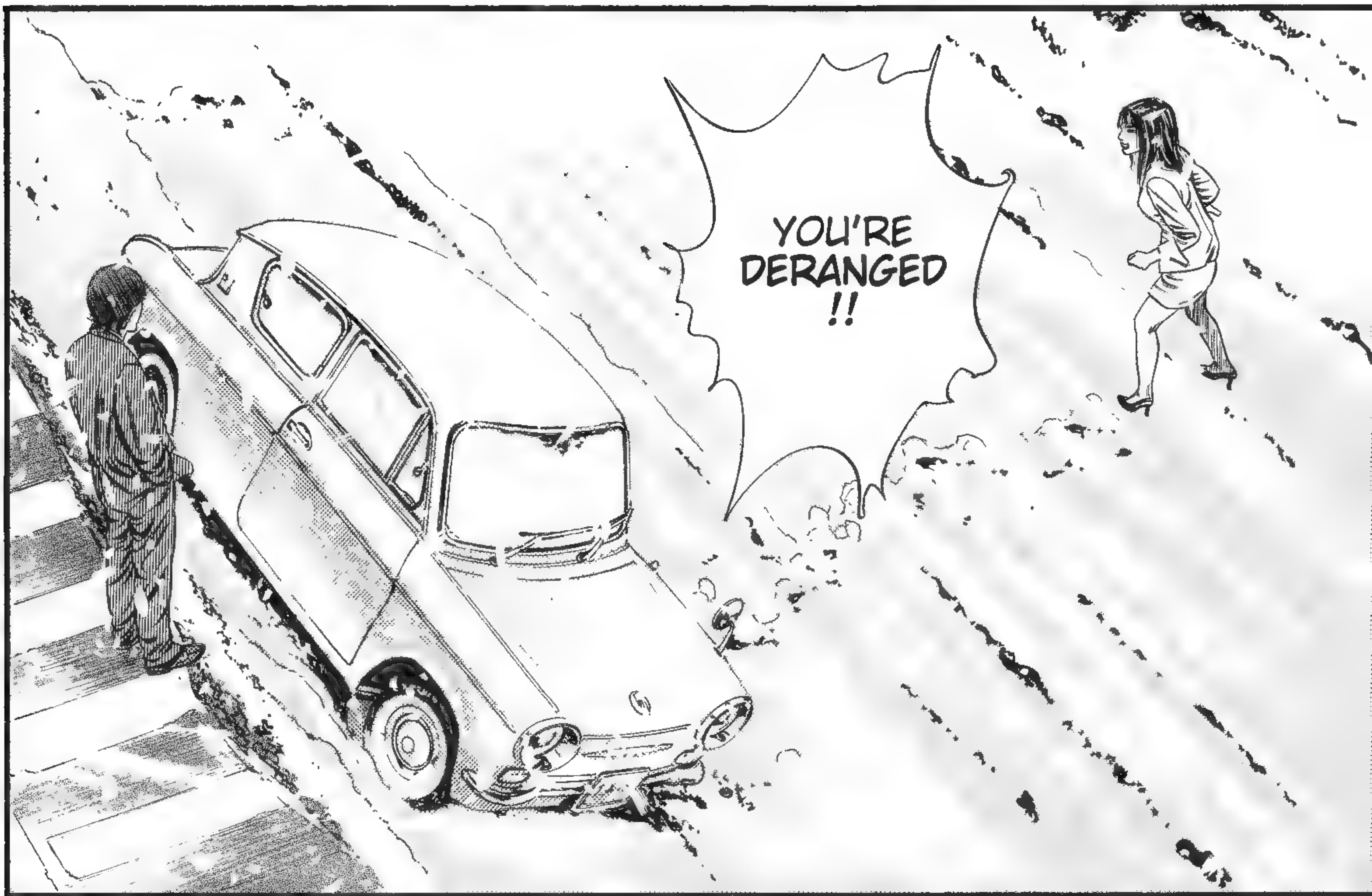
IT'S ALL
IN YOUR
HEAD!

IT'S
BULLSHIT!
WHAT-
EVER YOU'RE
SEEING...

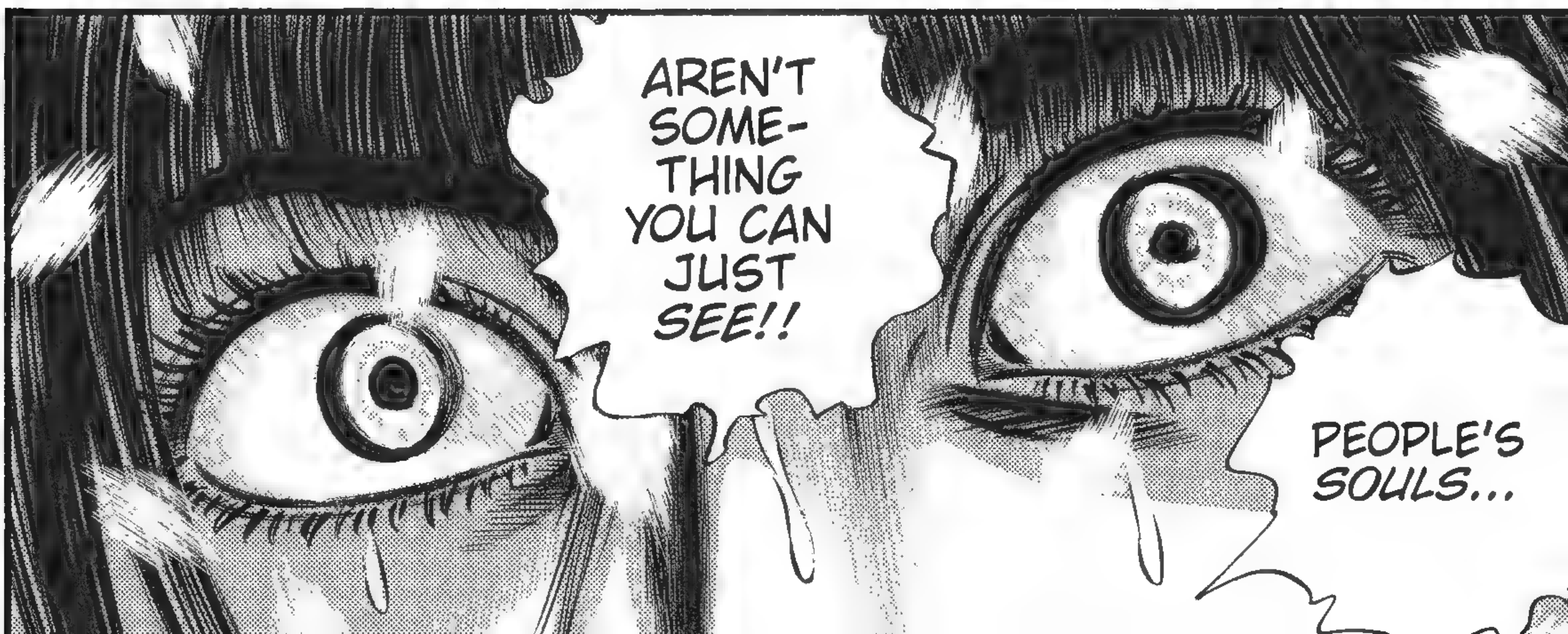


SOUL
THIS,
SOUL
THAT!

WOULD
YOU
SHUT
UP?!



YOU'RE
DERANGED
!!



AREN'T
SOME-
THING
YOU CAN
JUST
SEE!!

PEOPLE'S
SOULS...

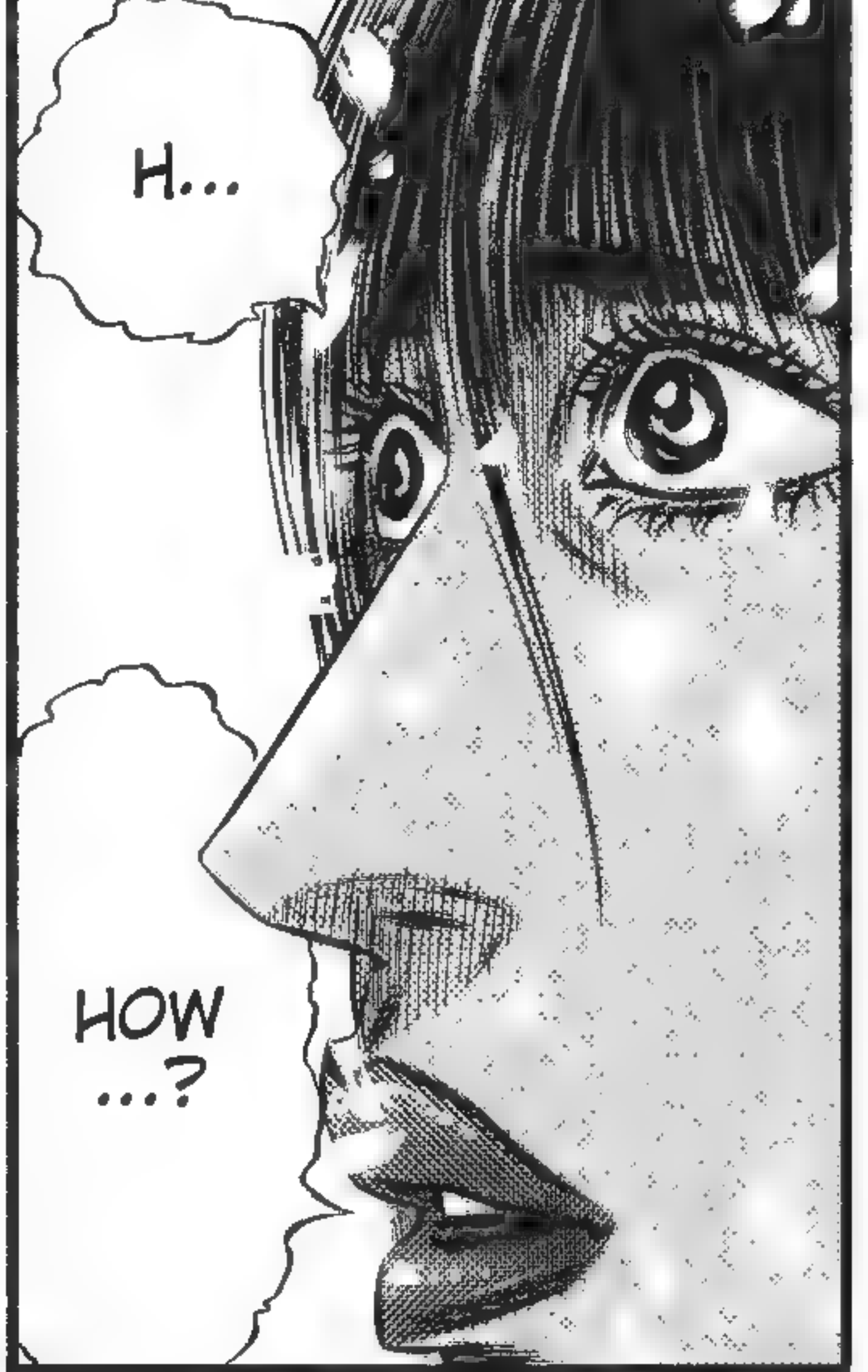






ZKSH
ZKSH...

GOOD THING
I STUCK A
GPS TRACKER
IN WITH THE
MONEY.



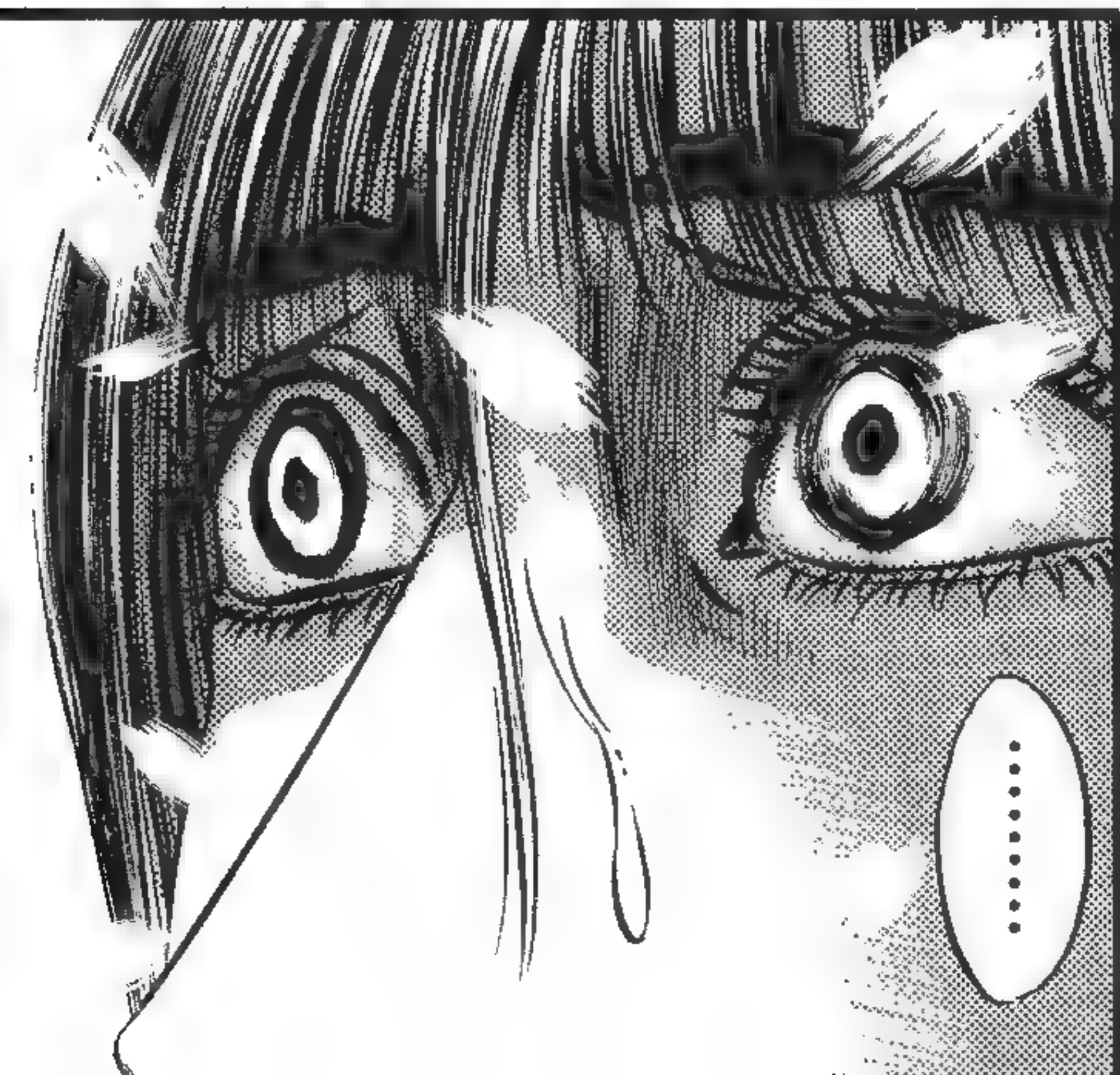
H...

HOW
...?



WHOA...

S
K
S
H
H
H



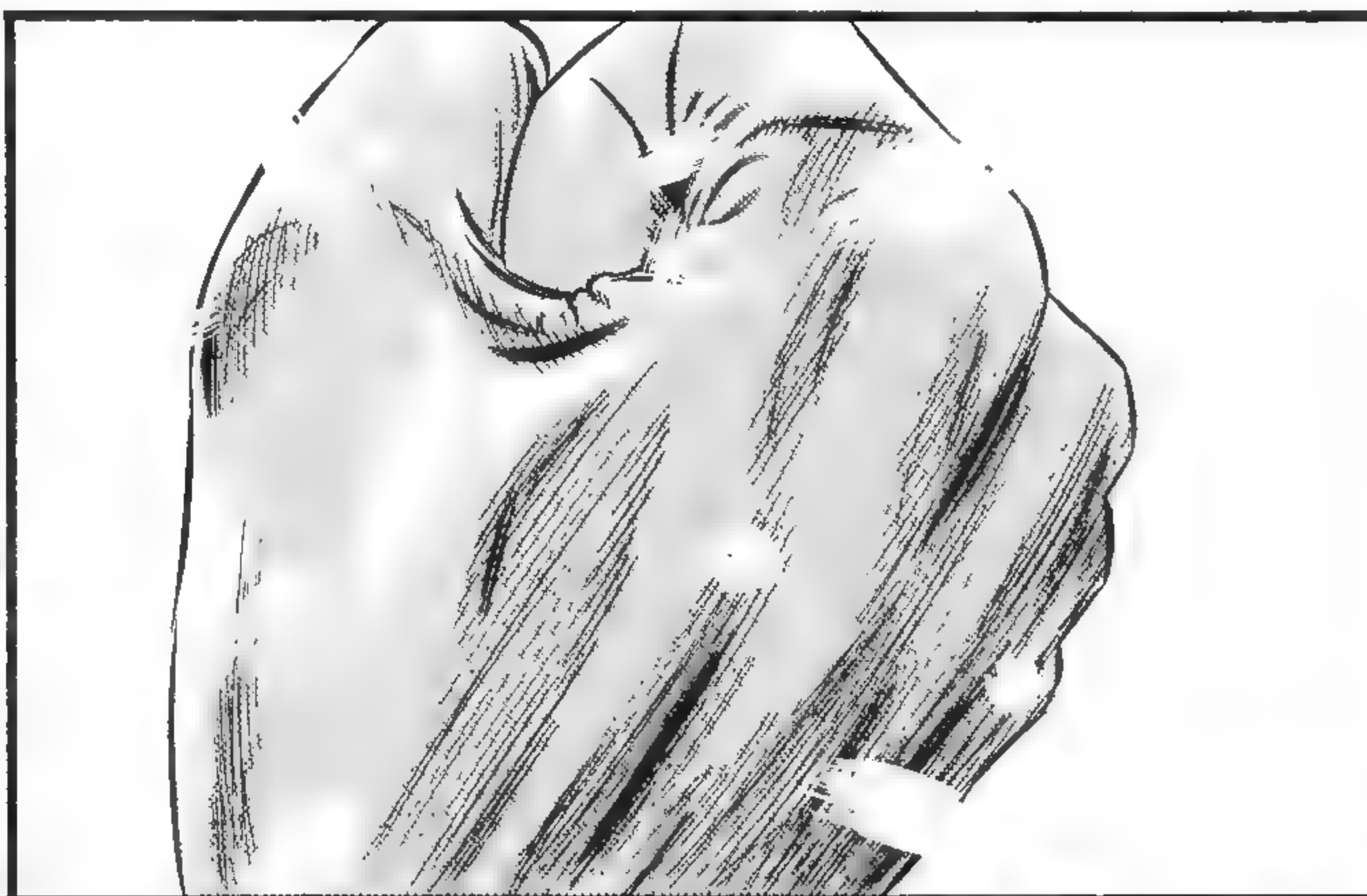
.....



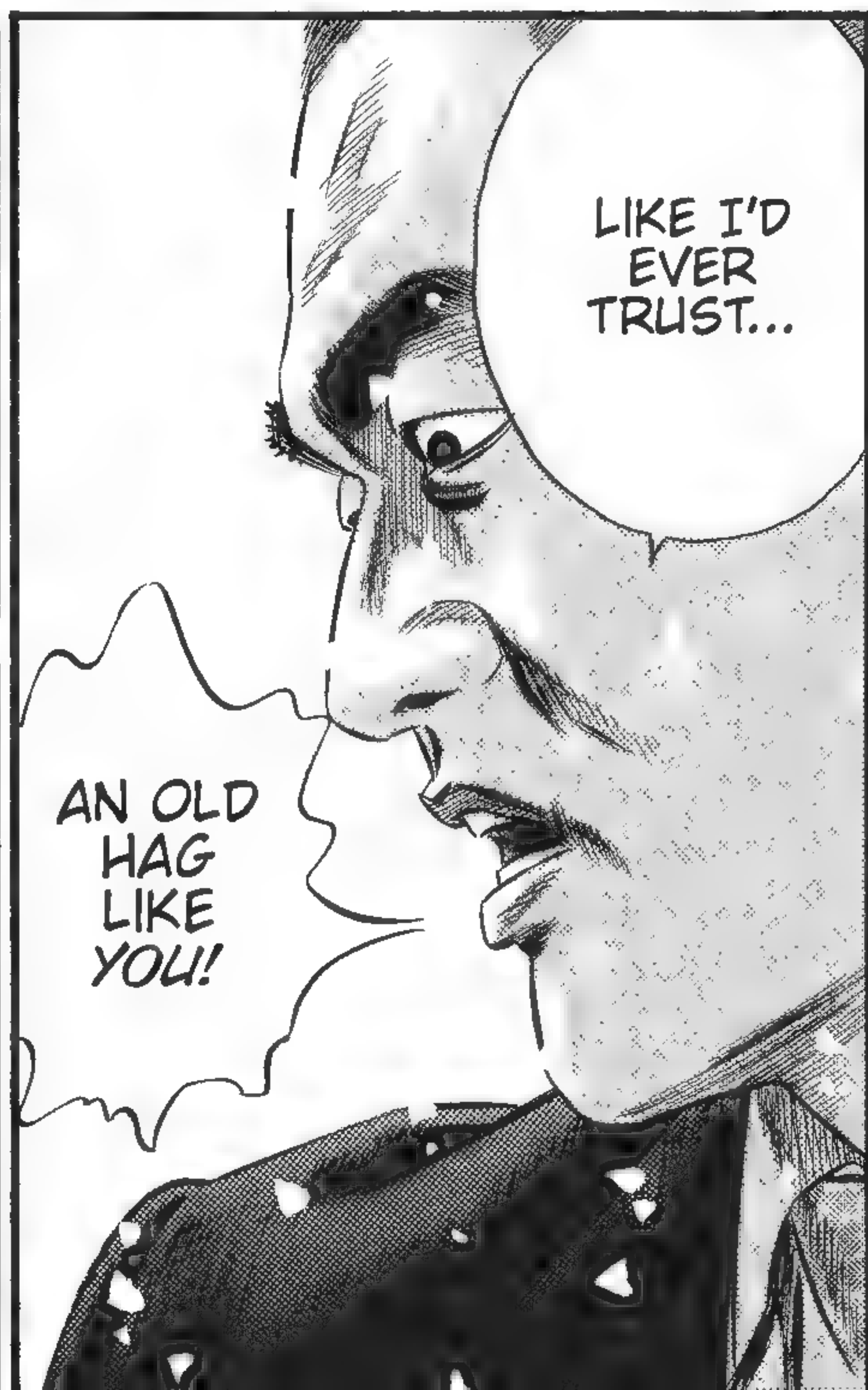
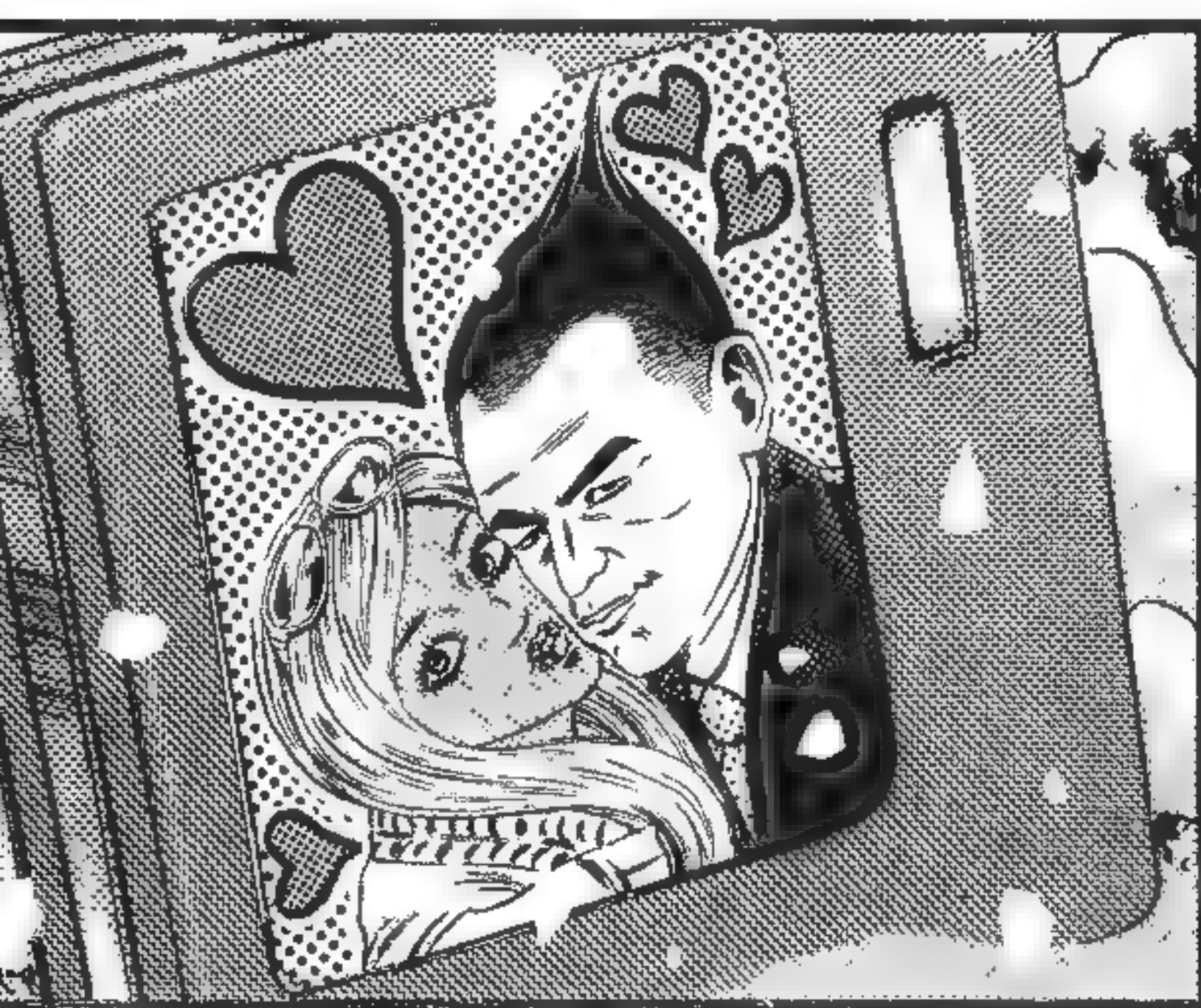
TRYIN'A
RUN OFF
WITH OUR
STASH.

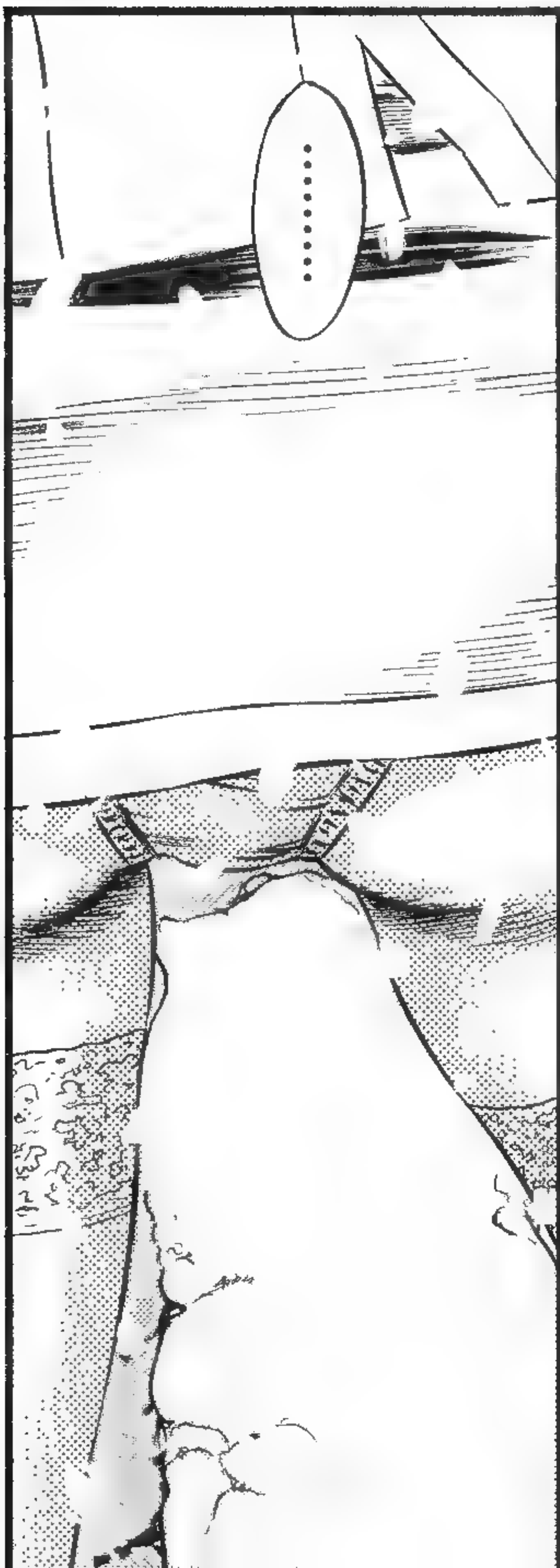
LOOK
AT THE
BALLS
ON THIS
BROAD!

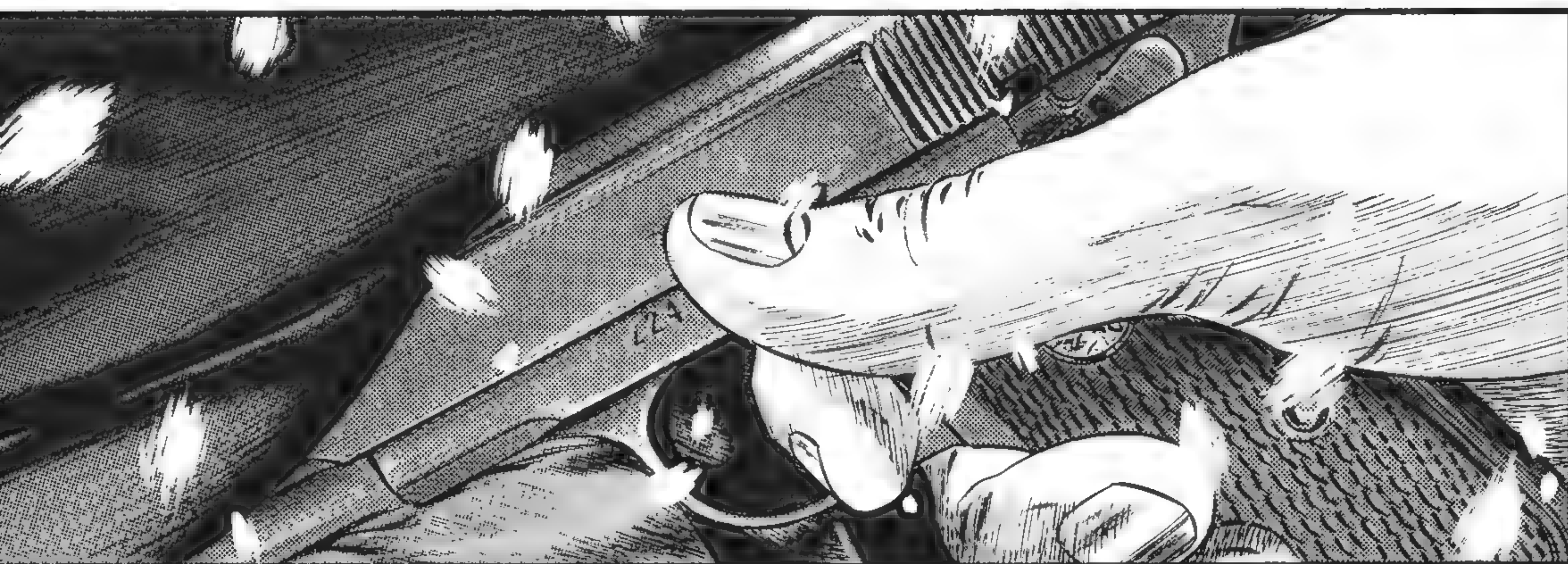


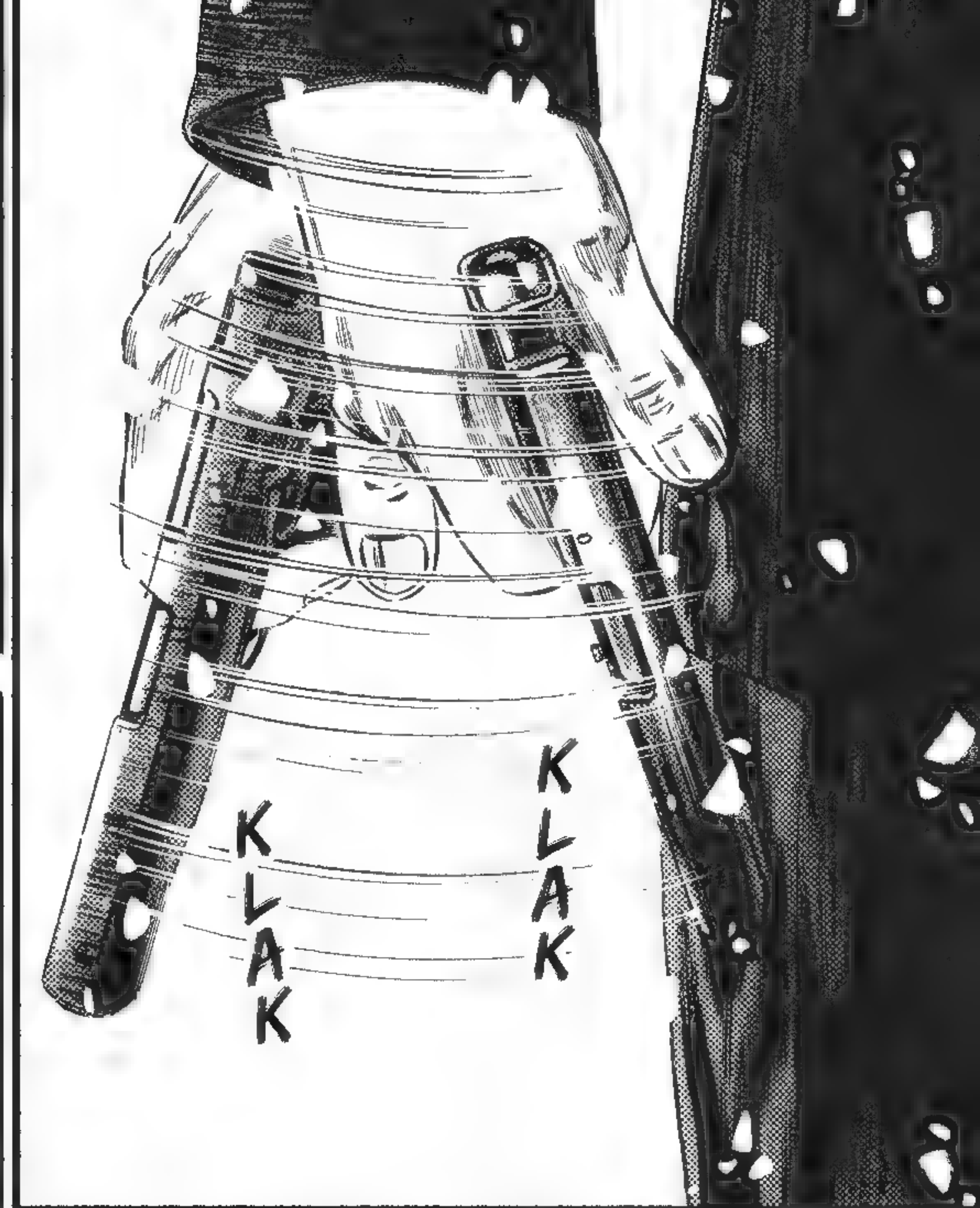
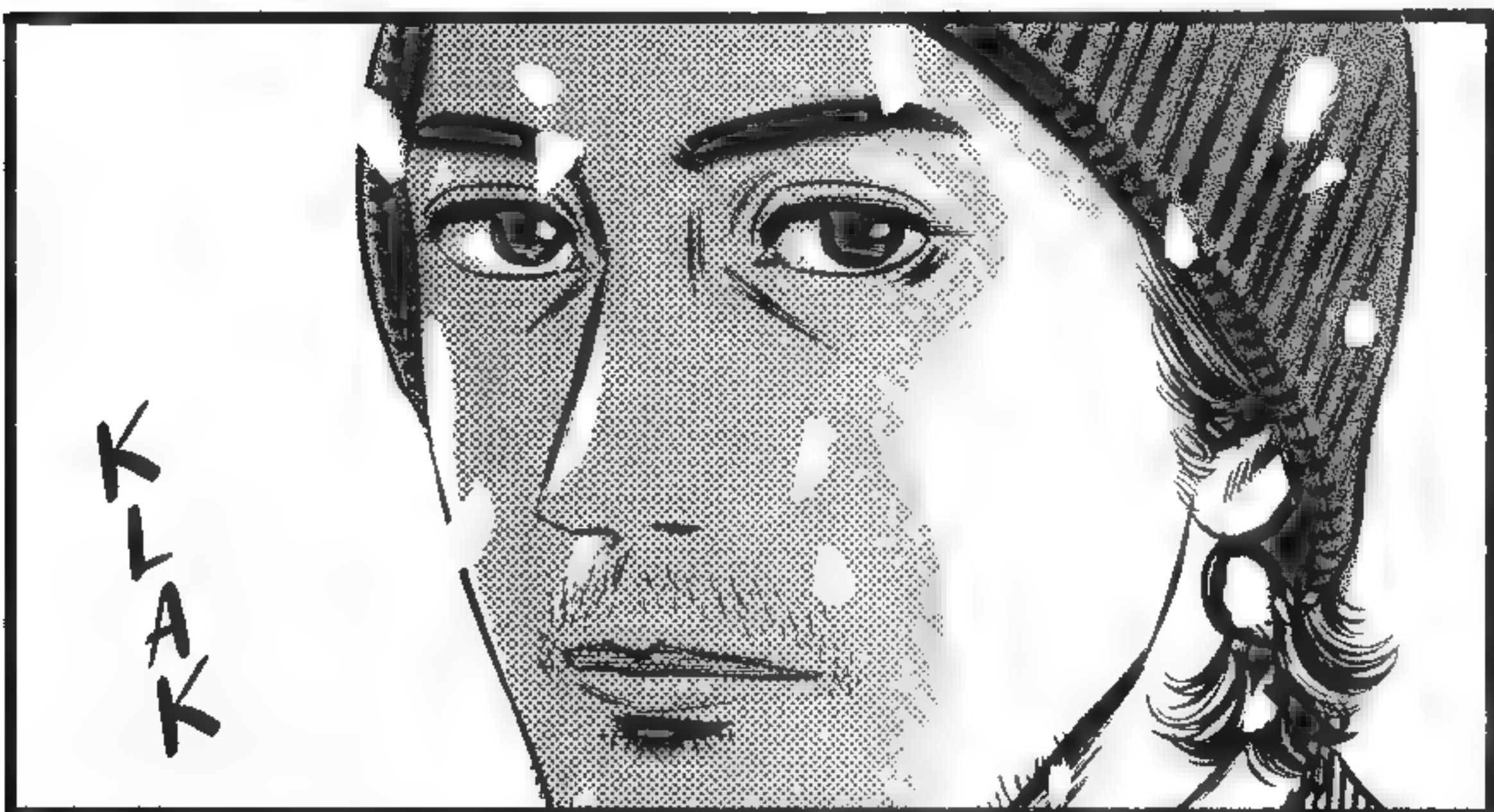


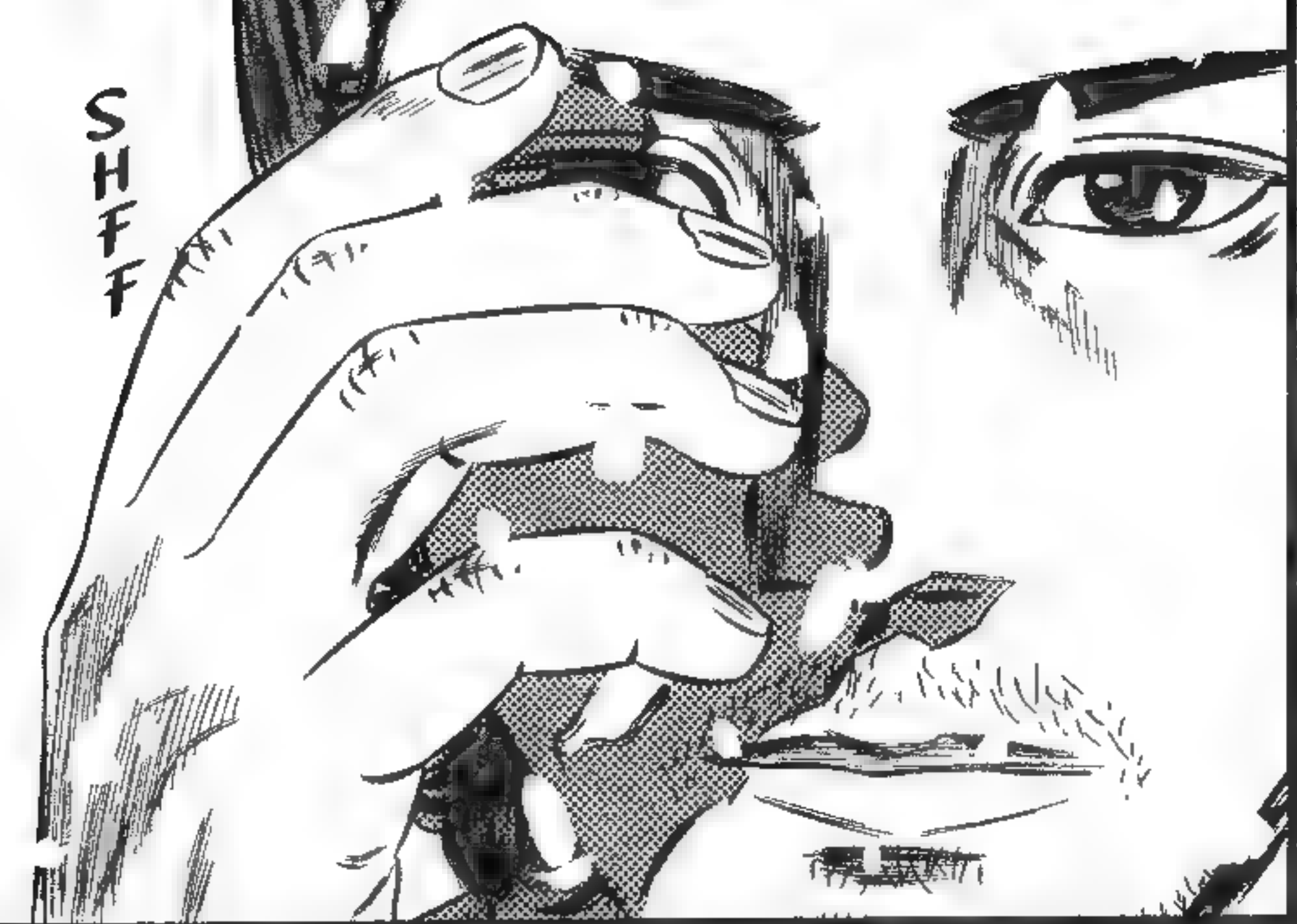


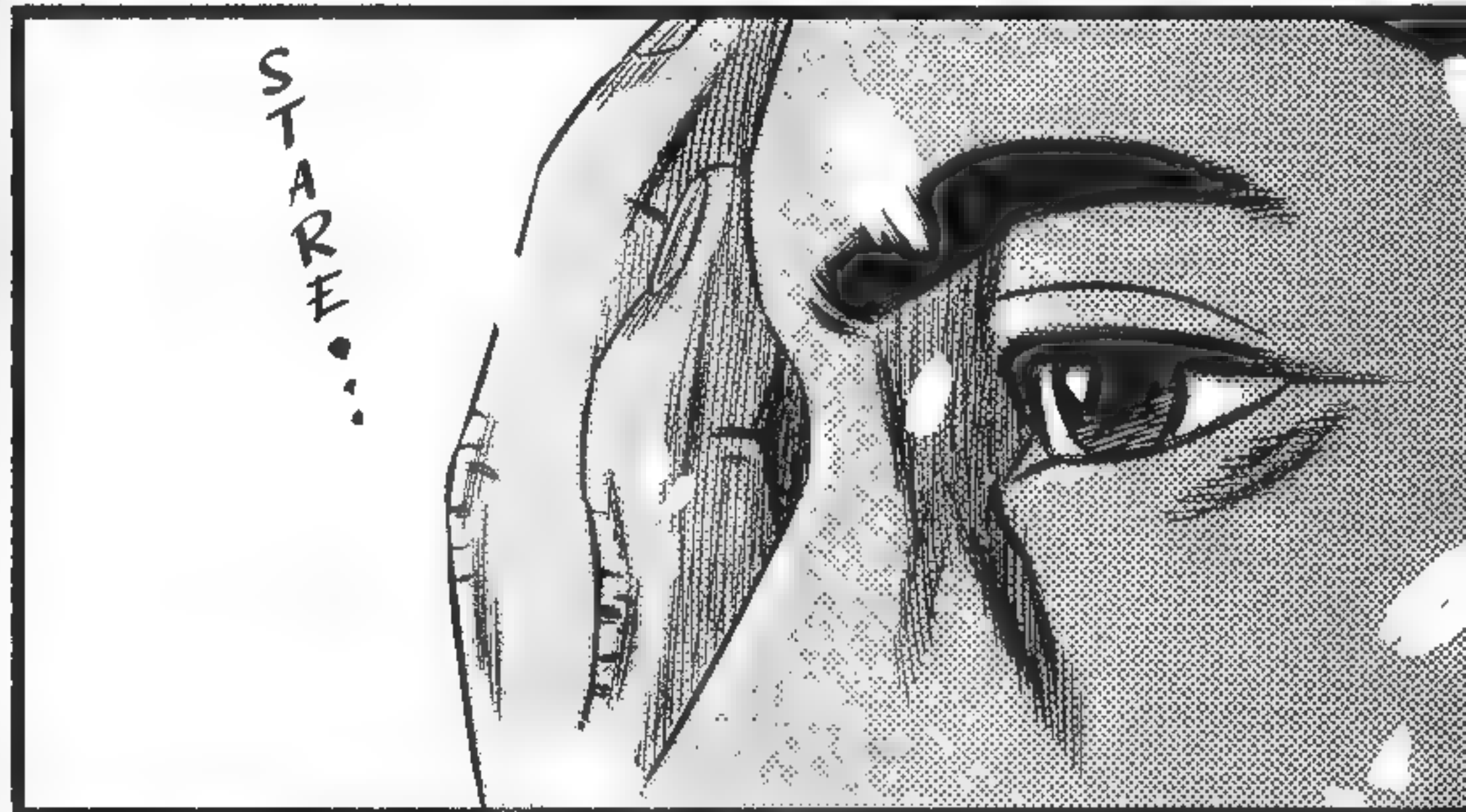


















YOU
COULD PUT
SOMEONE'S
EYE OUT
WITH THAT
THING.



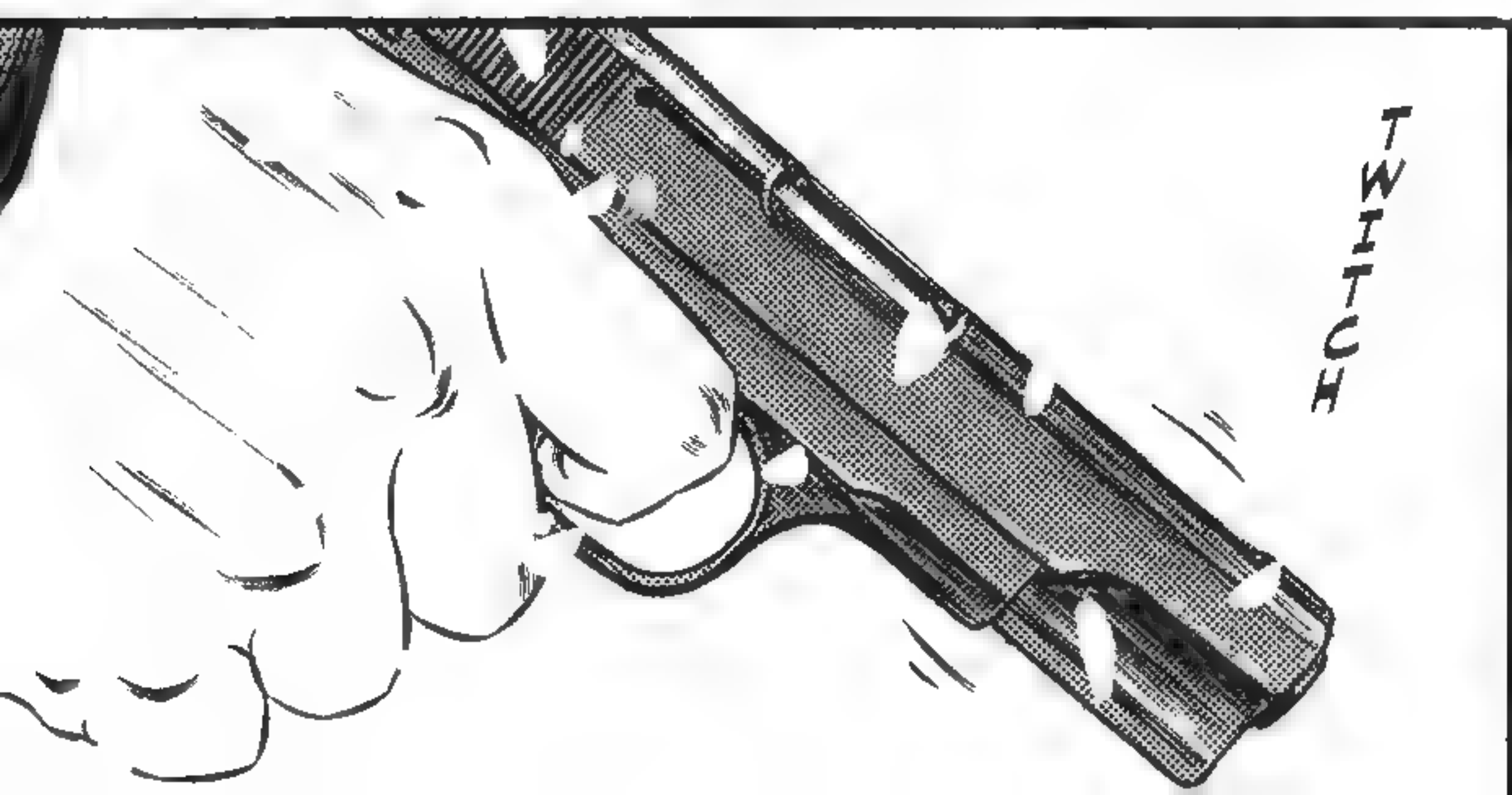
.....
?



EYE...?



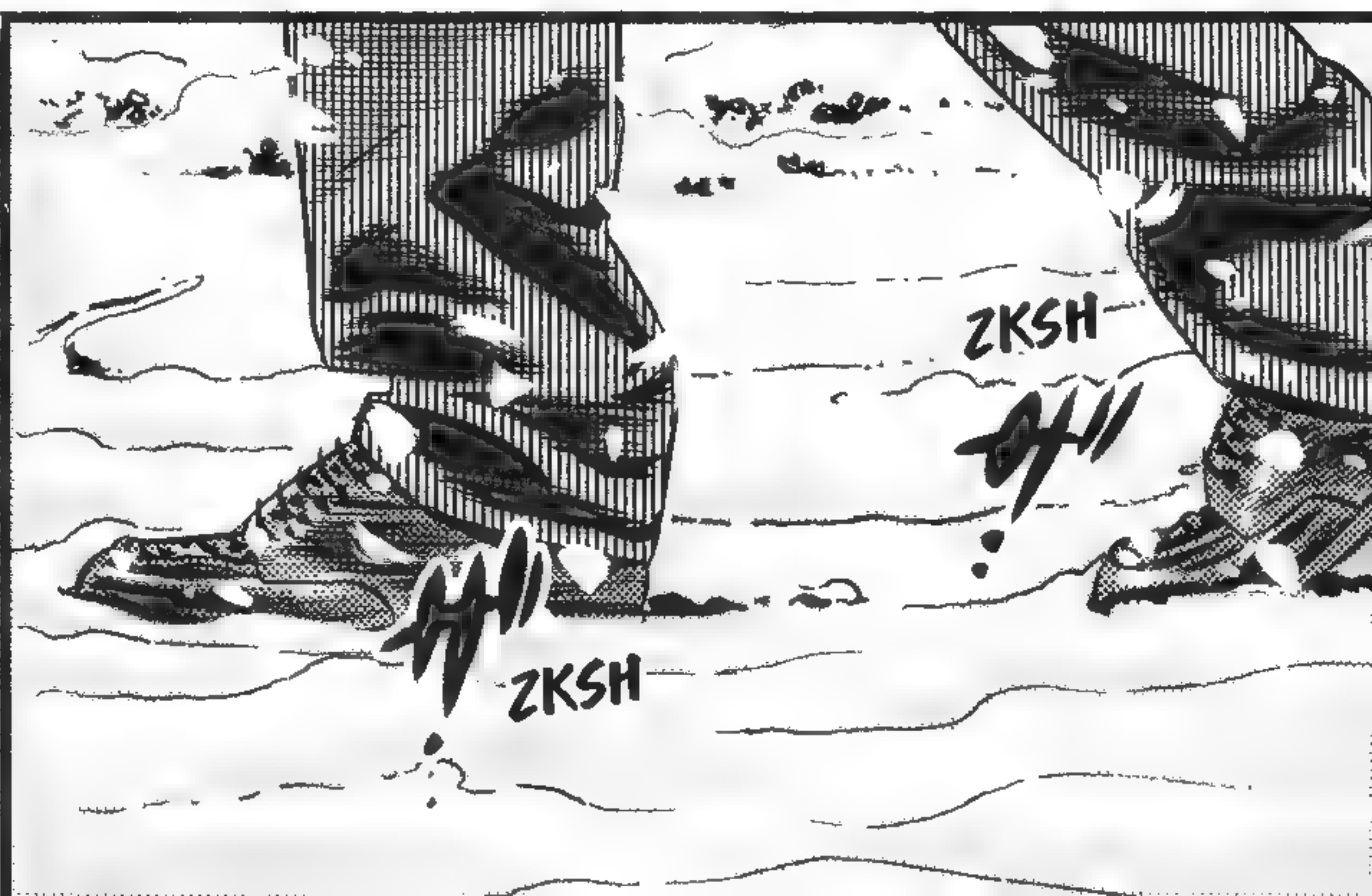
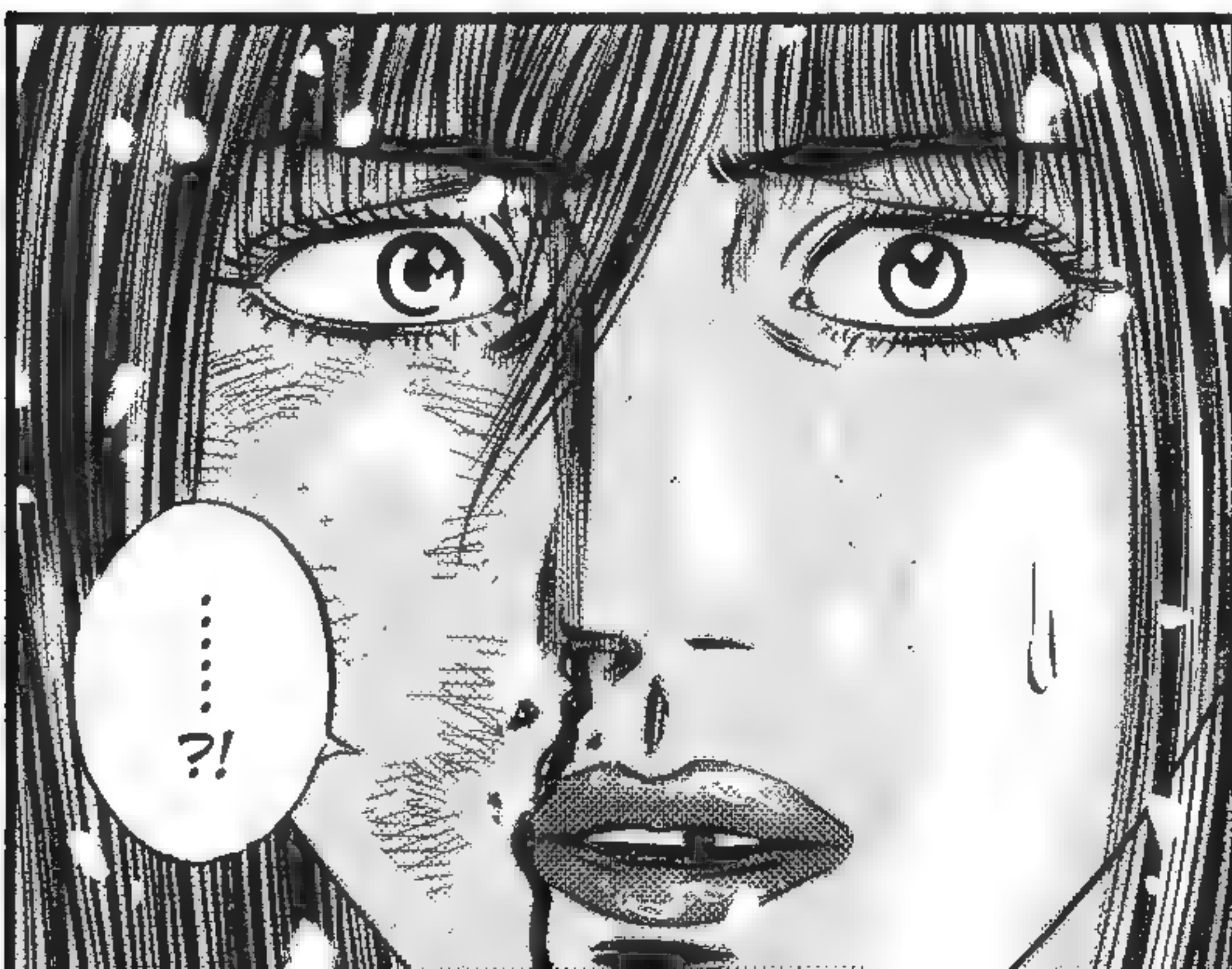
YOUR
LITTLE
SISTER
...?

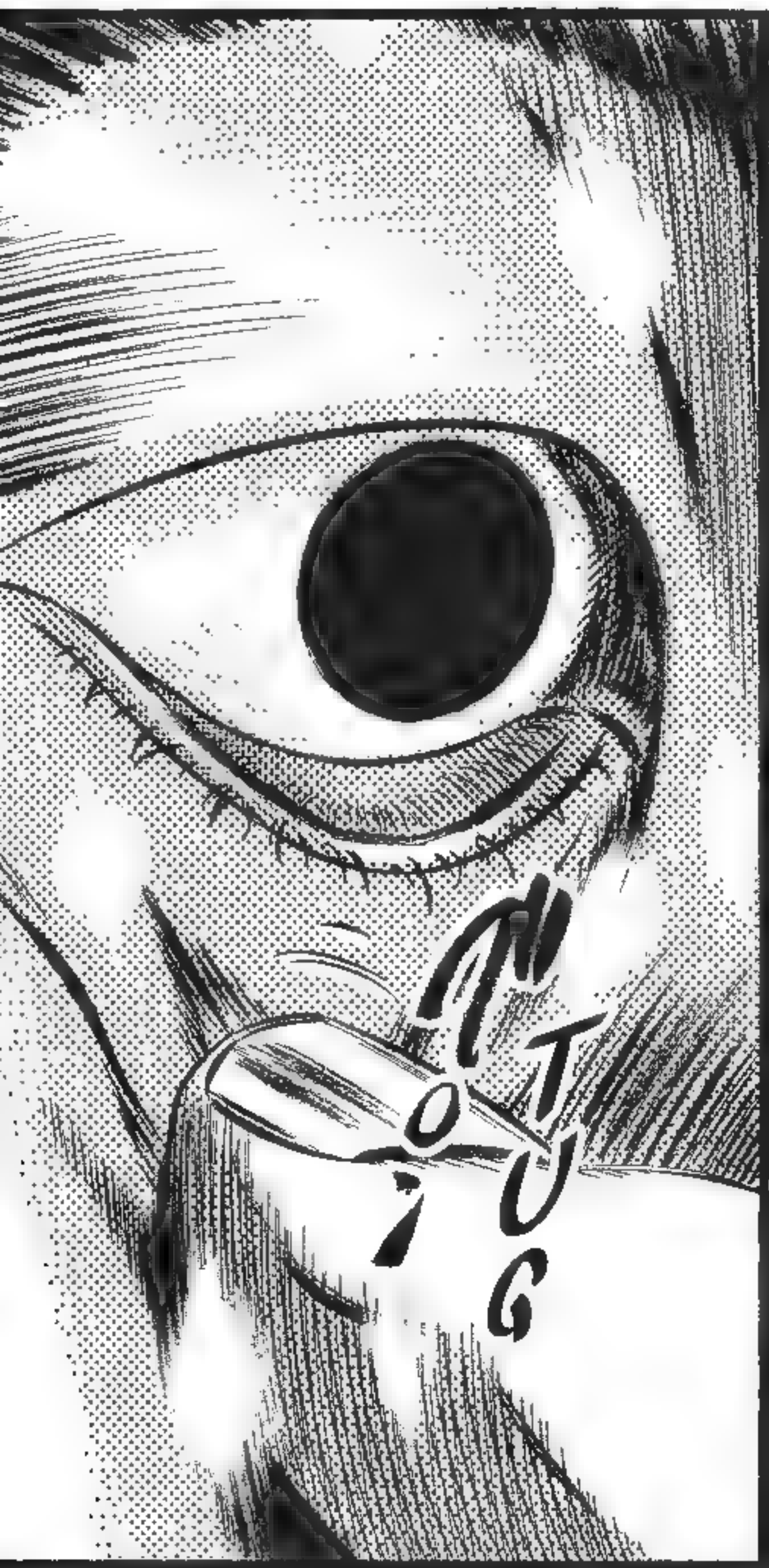


1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100



!









HER EYE
WAS...



BECAUSE
OF THAT
TOY GUN...



AUGH
...!

SH
S
M
P



HOW...?

WHAT?

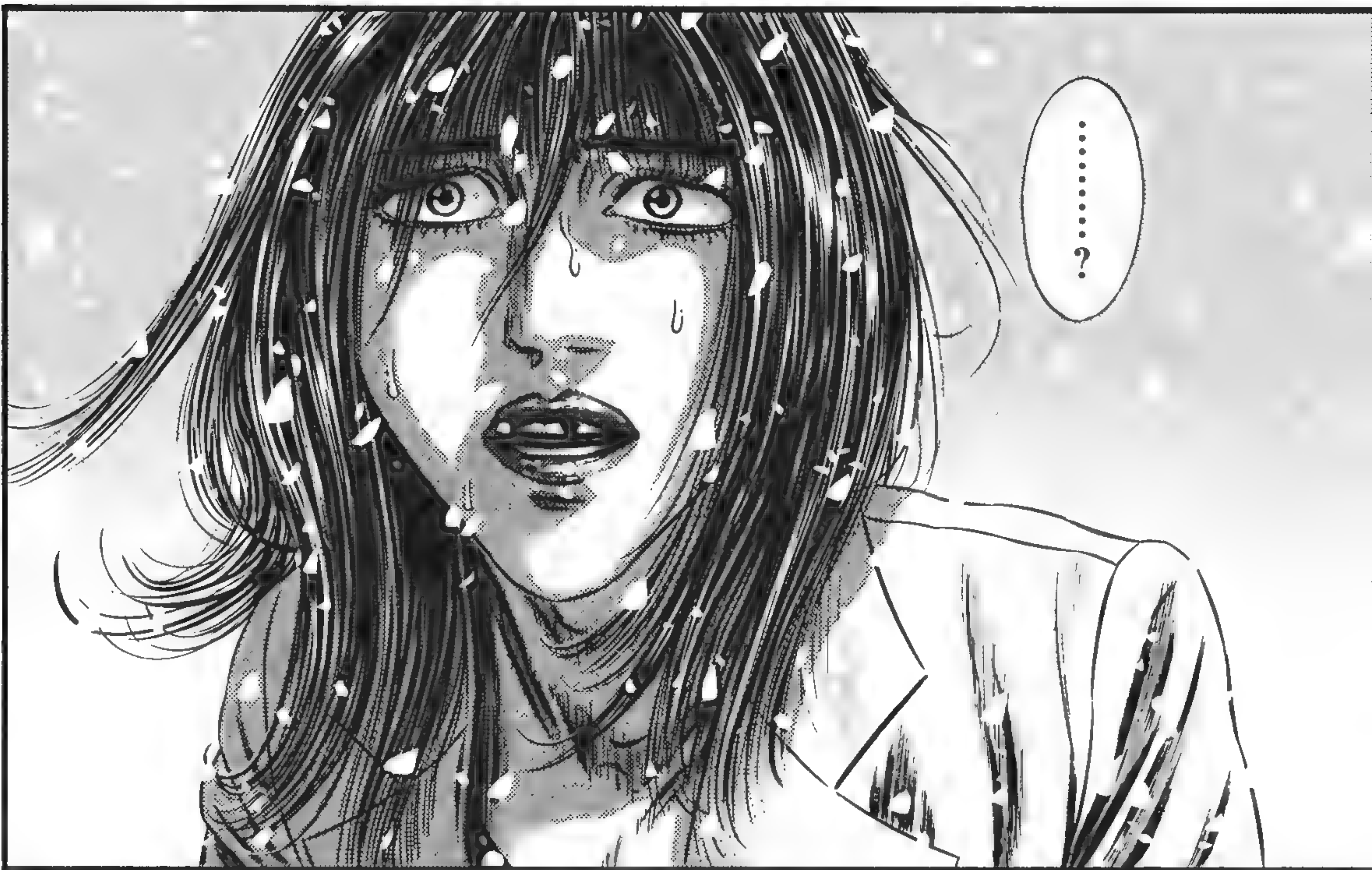
T
R
E
M
B
L
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T
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E

T
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M
B
L
E



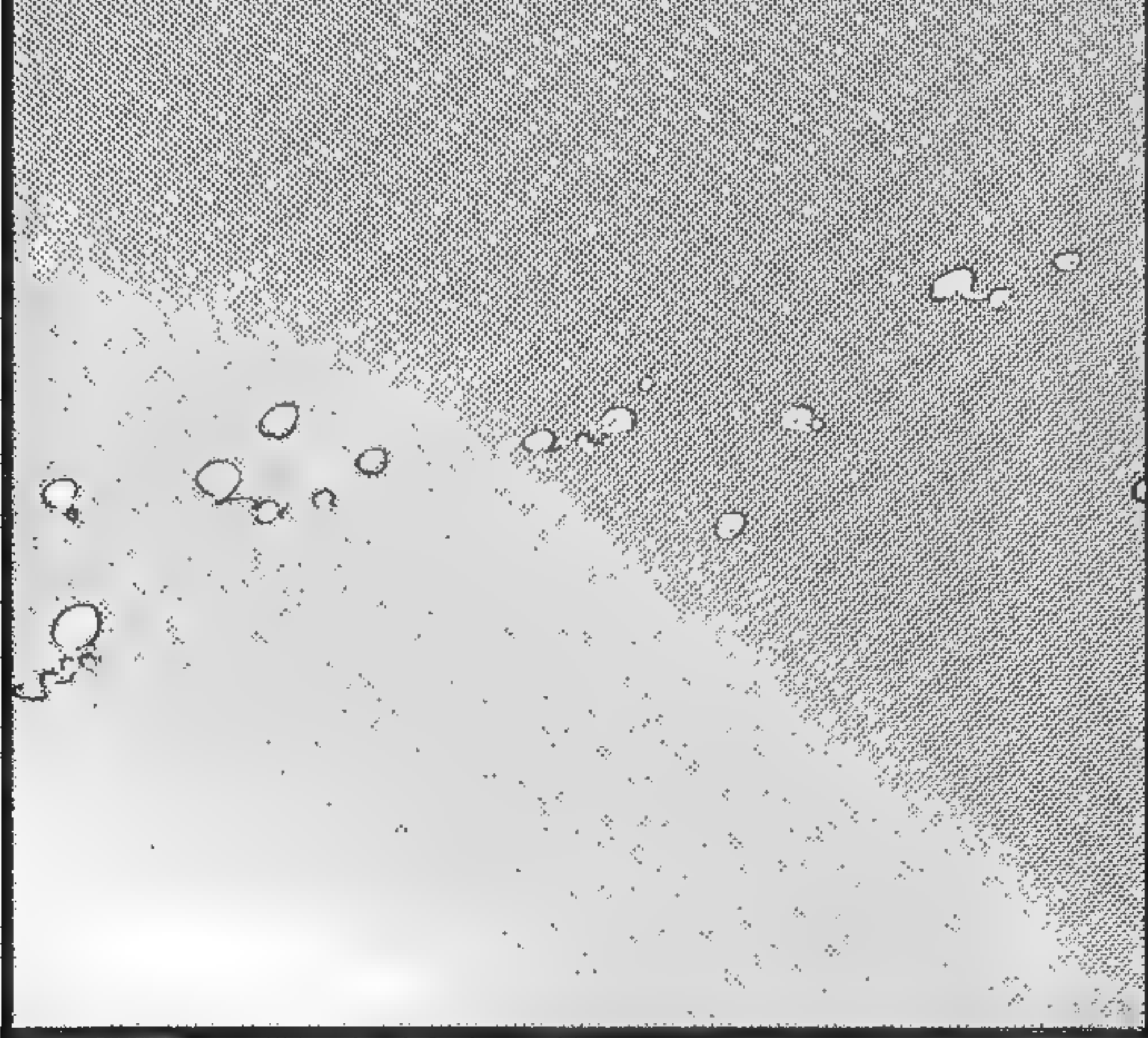
?!

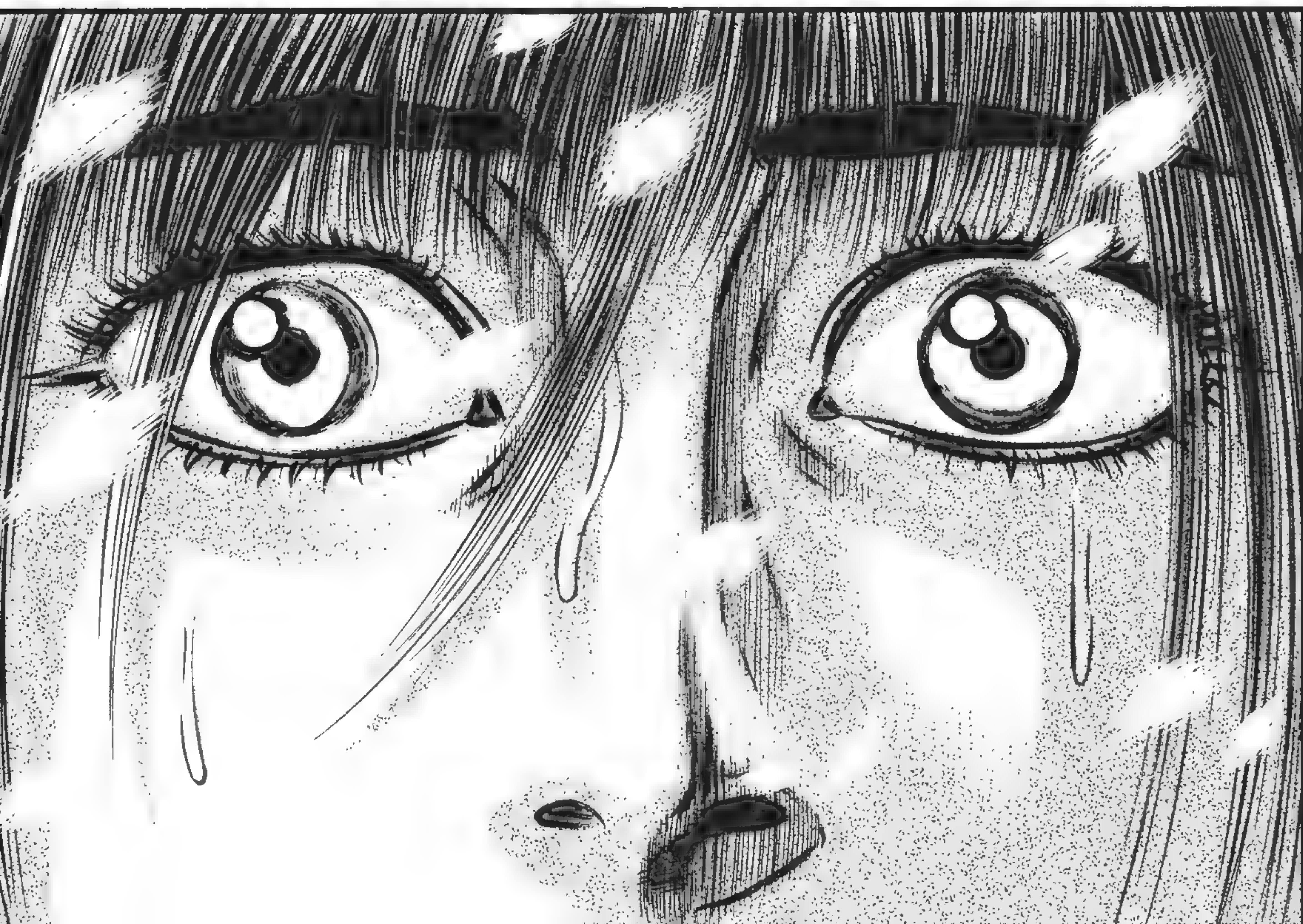


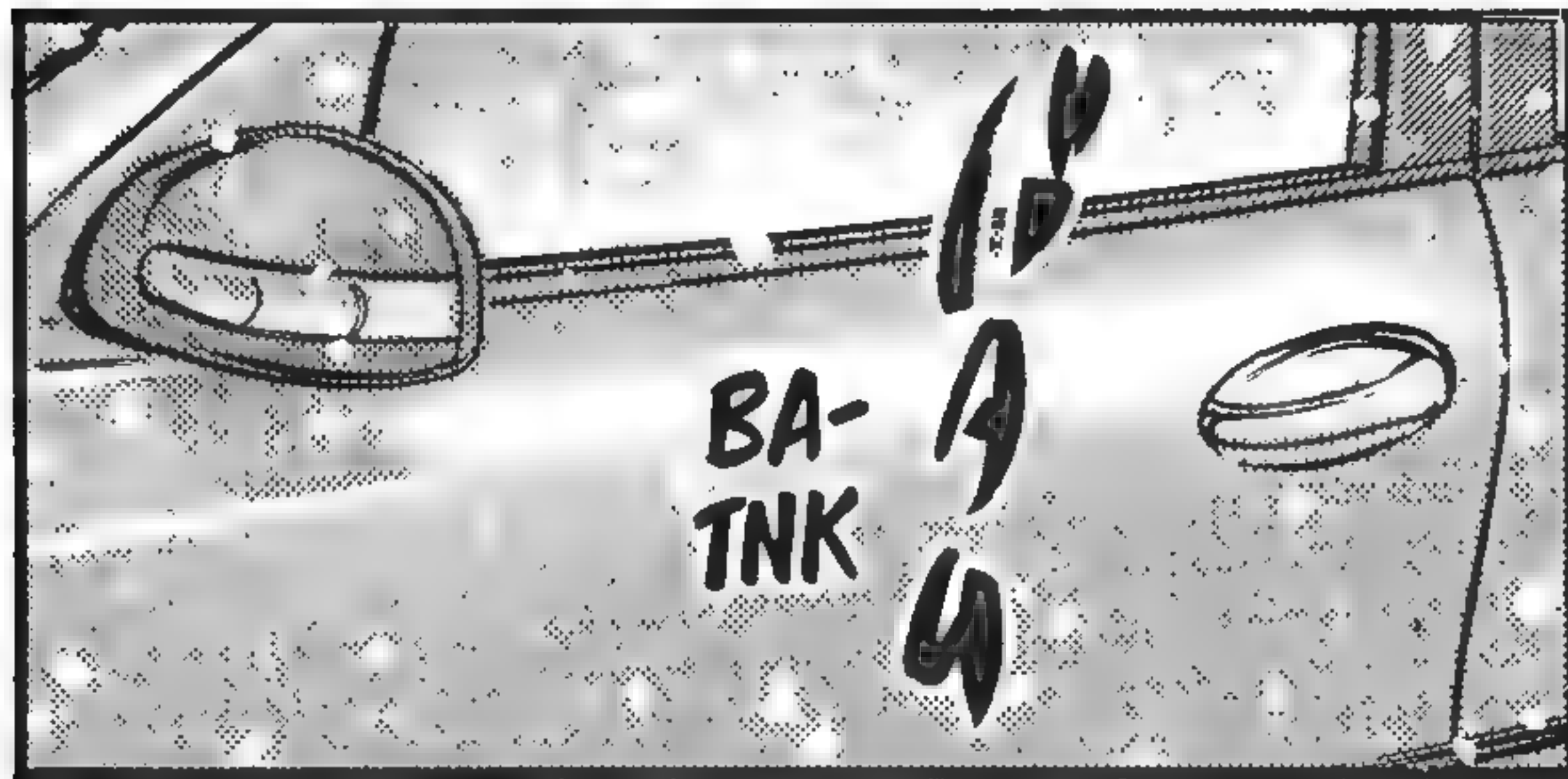




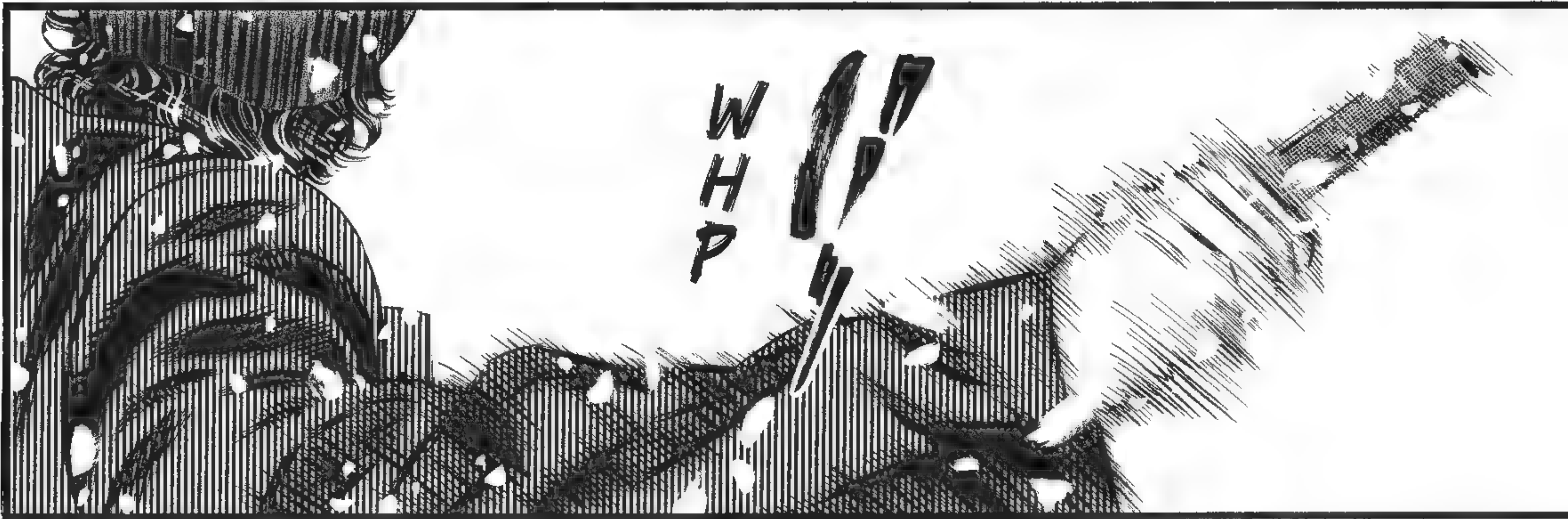
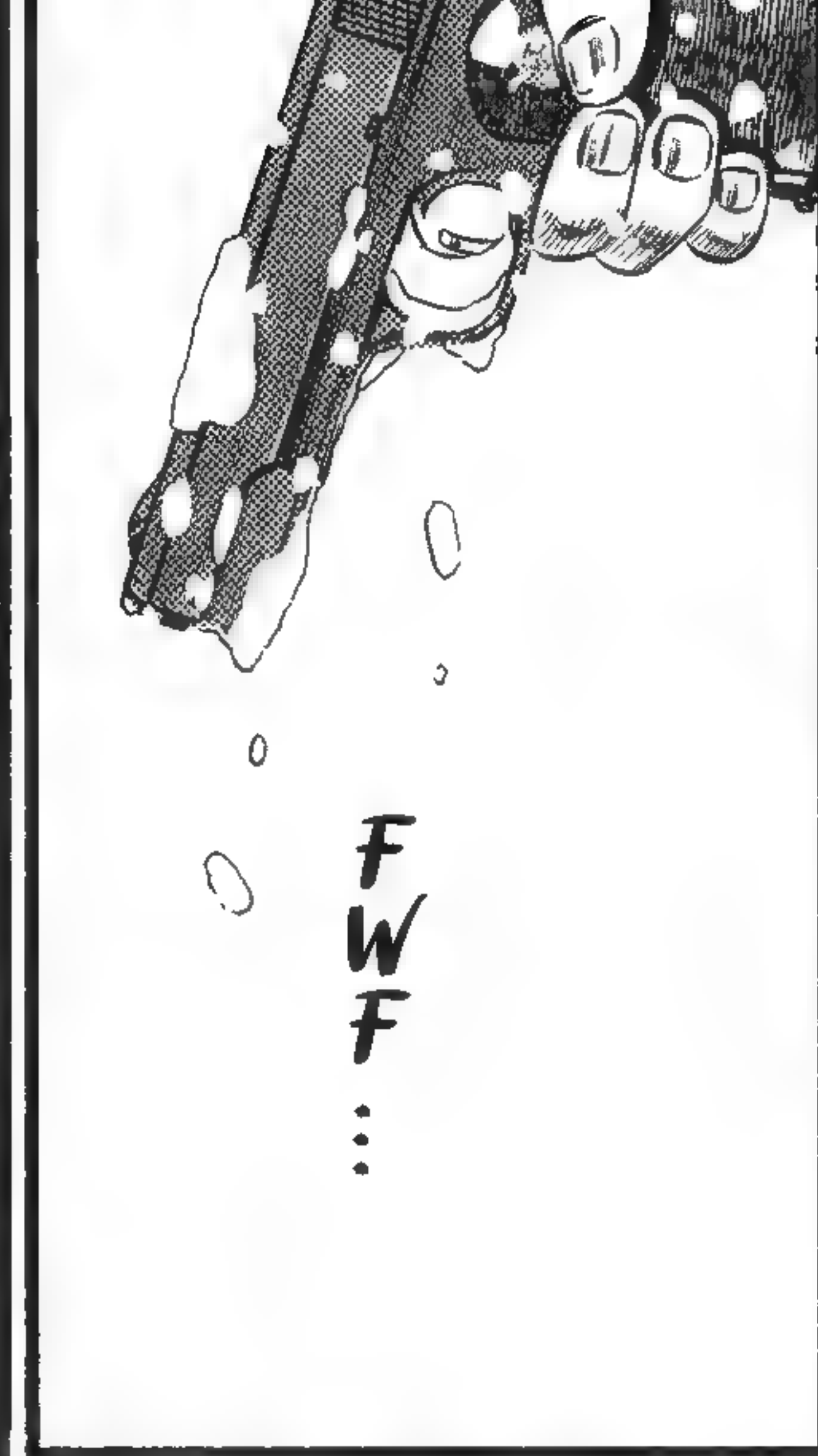


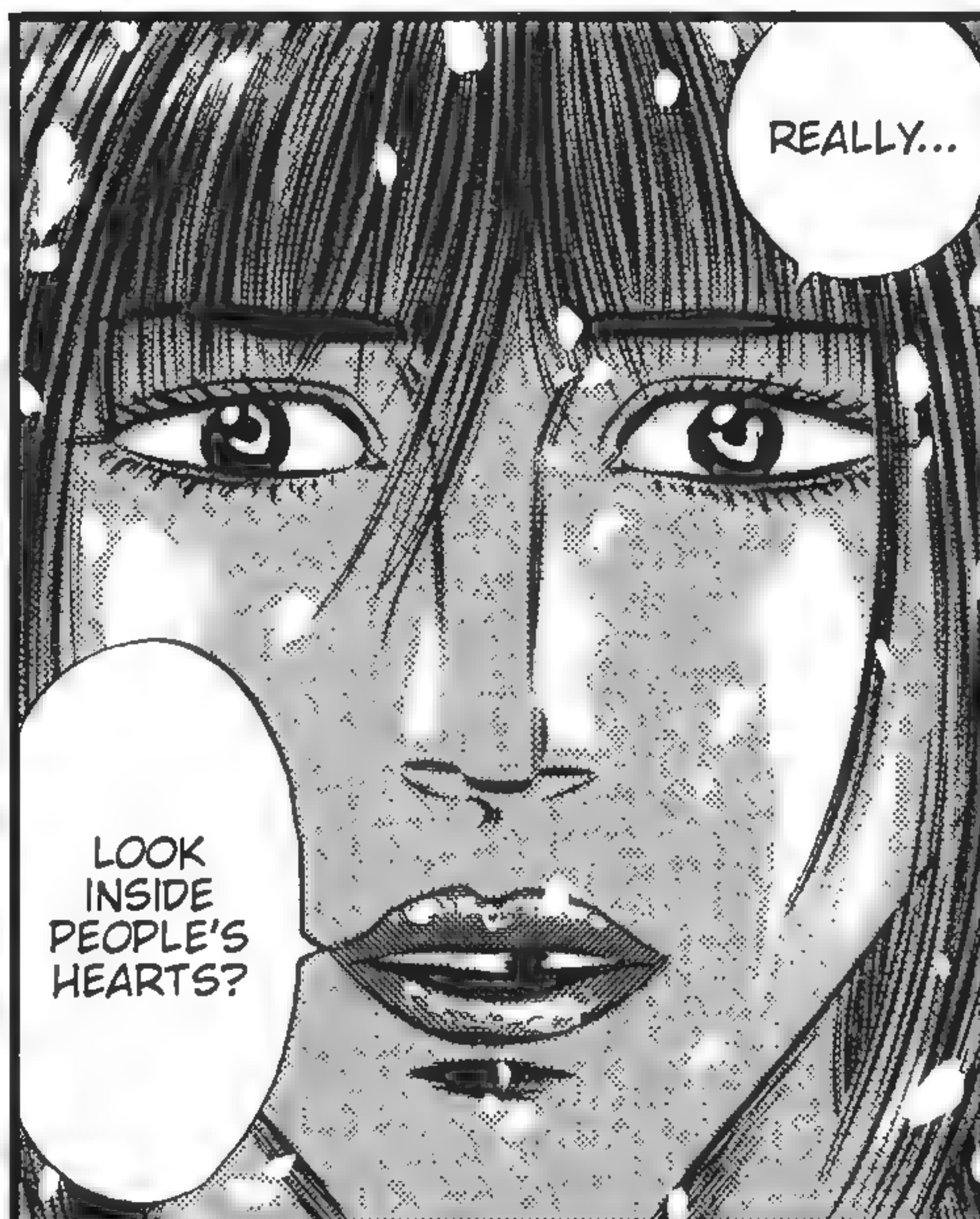
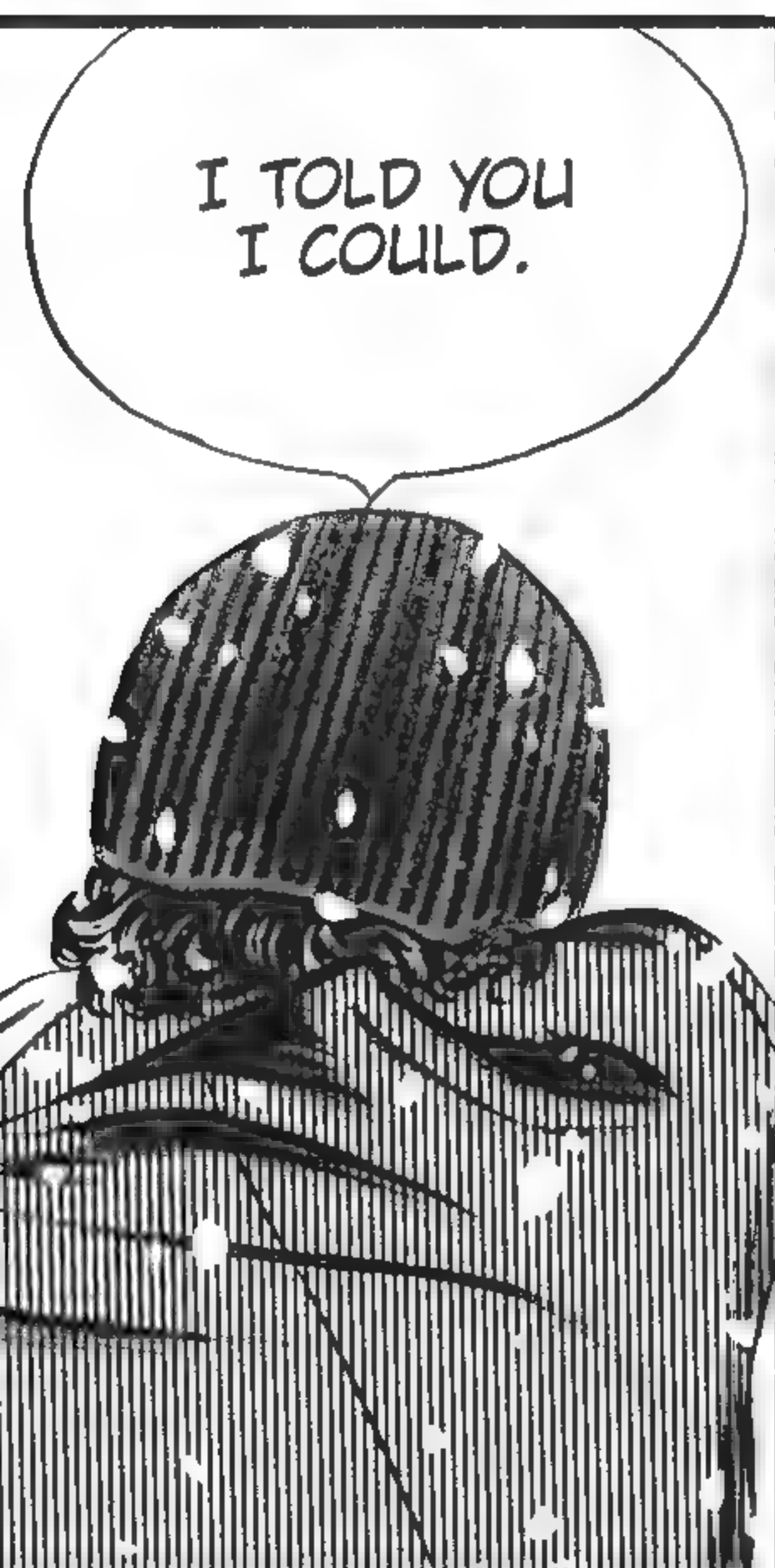










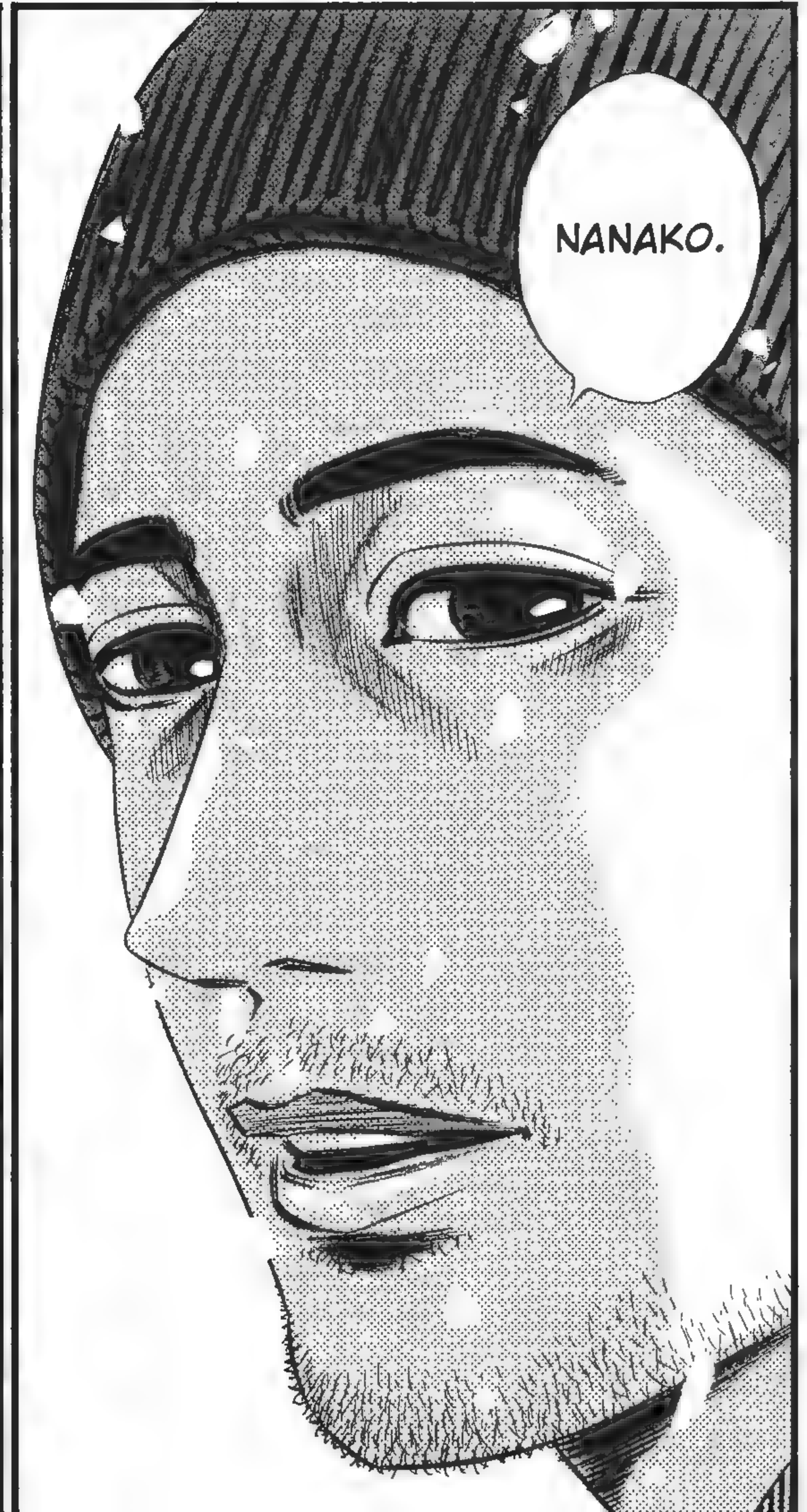


LOOK AT
MINE?

AND...

AND
YOU'LL
REALLY...







BUT
ARE YOU
SURE...

YES.
I'M...
NANAKO.

I CAN
LEARN TO
SEE YOUR
HEART
TOO?



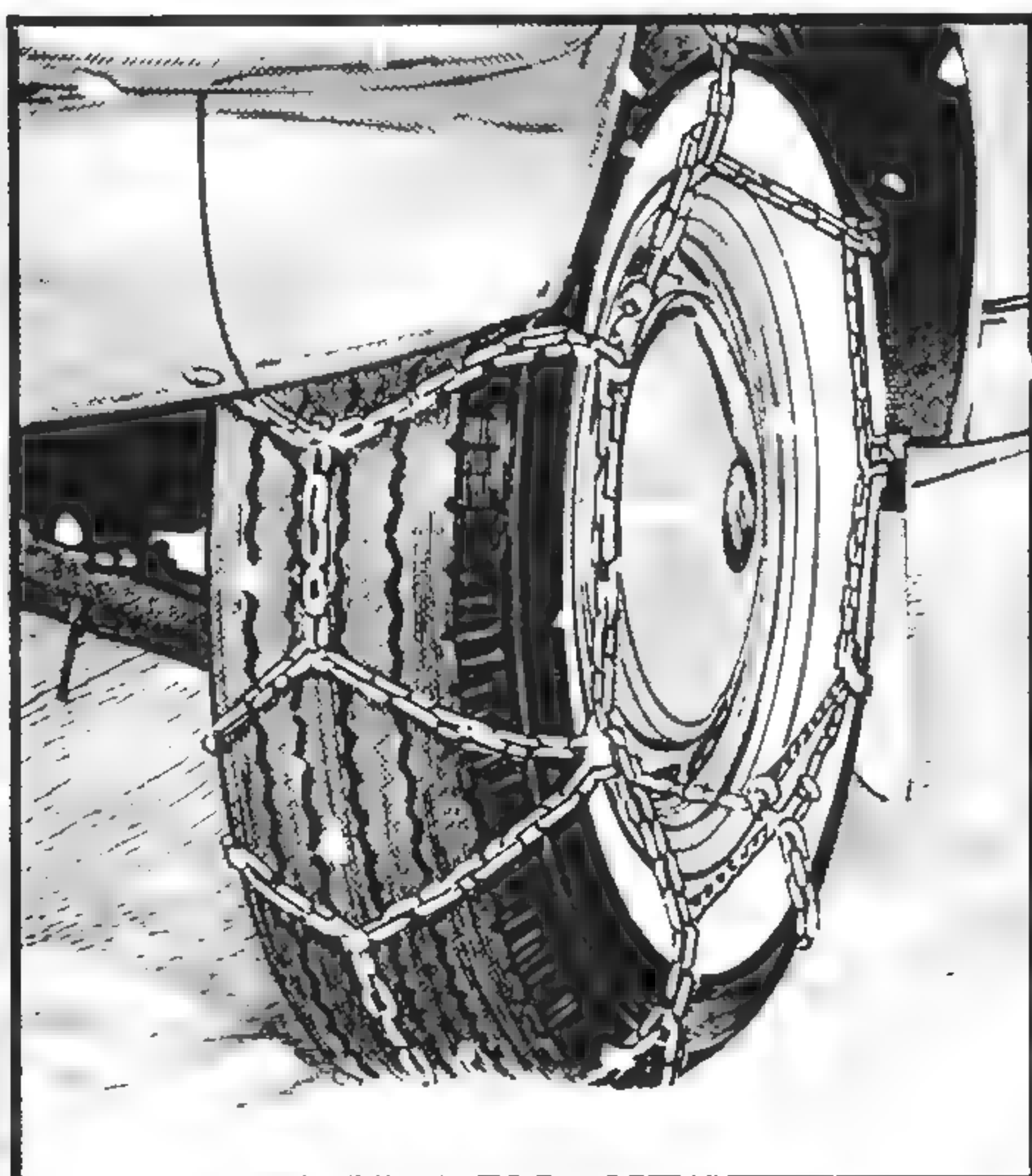
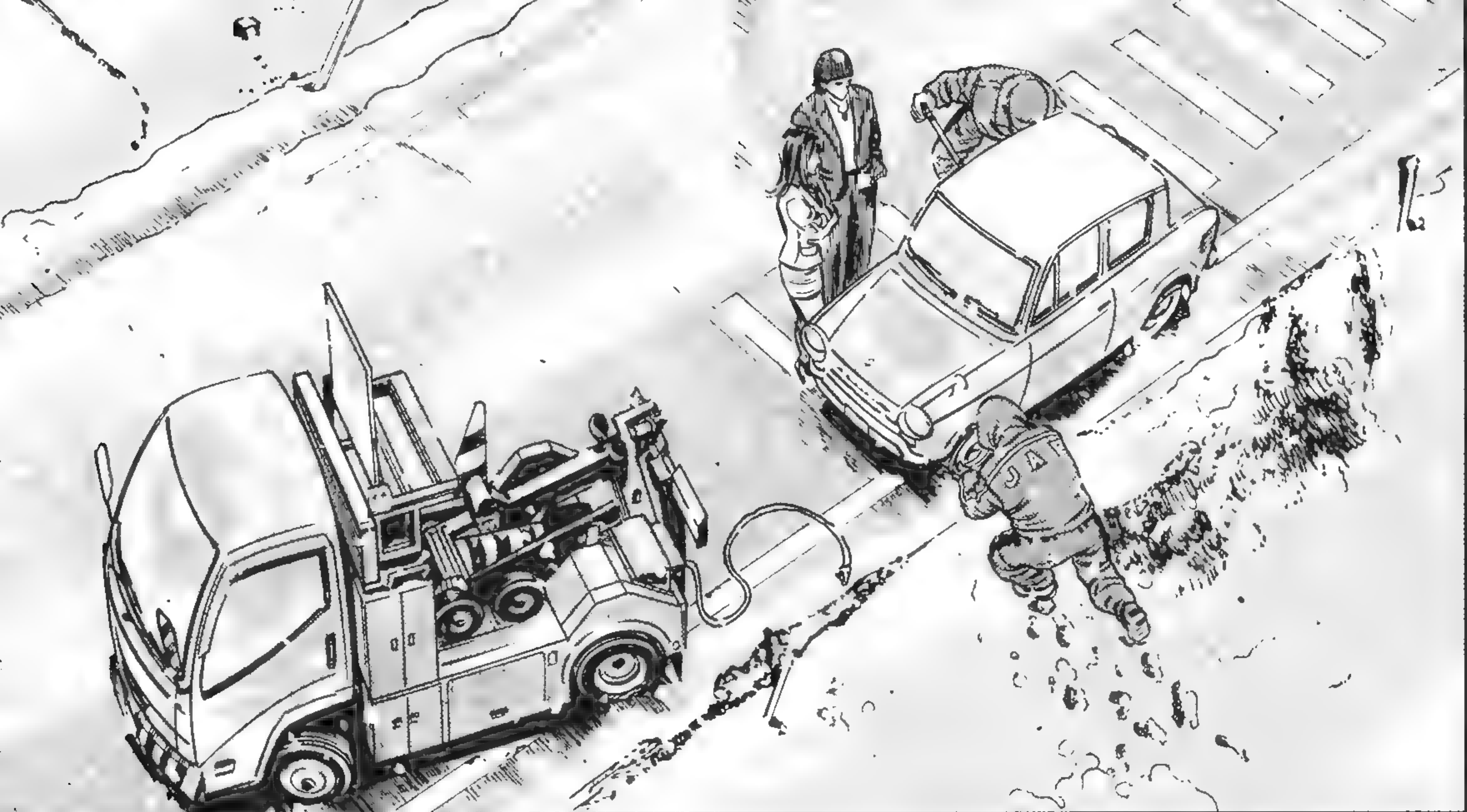
Y...

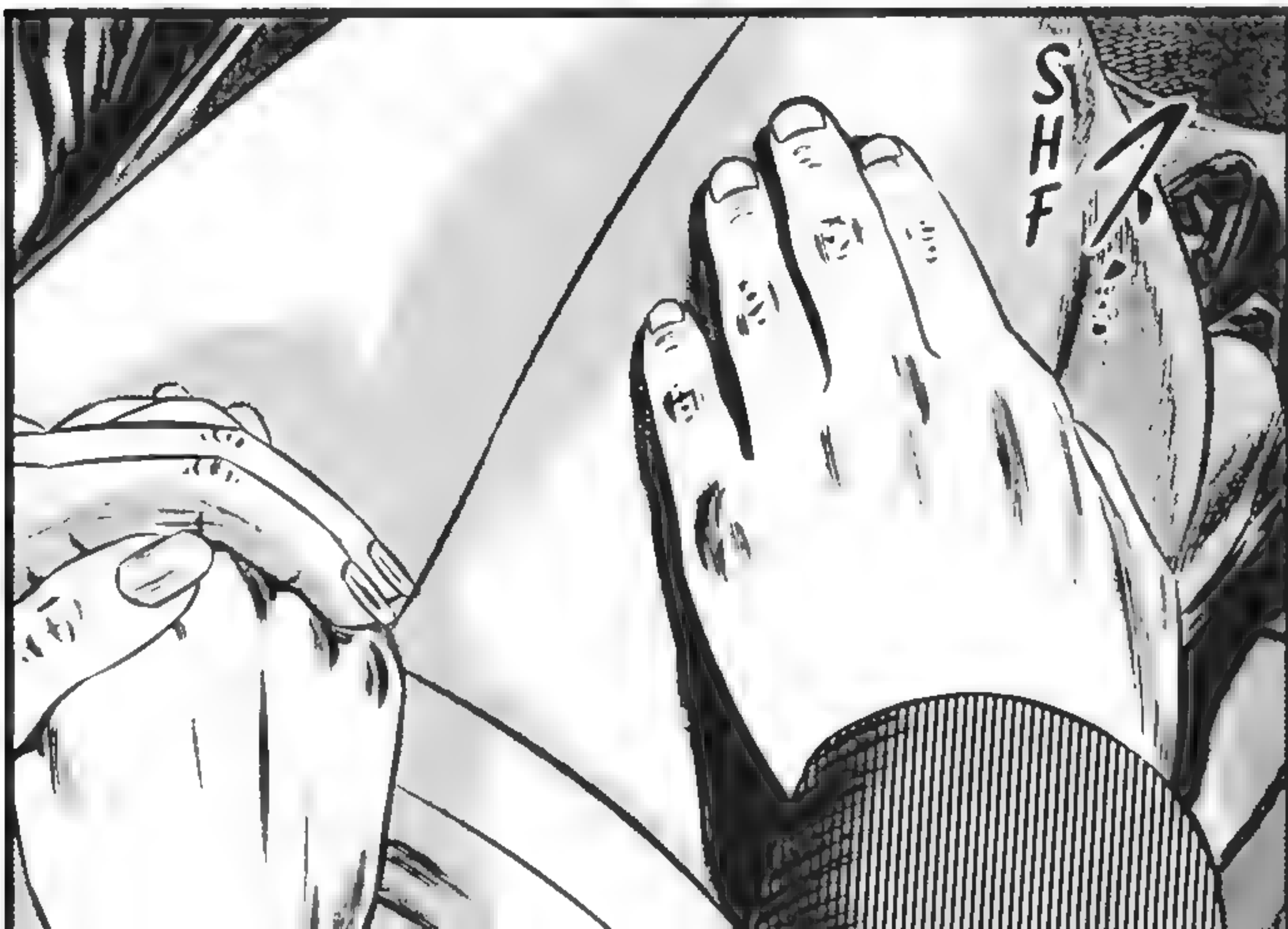


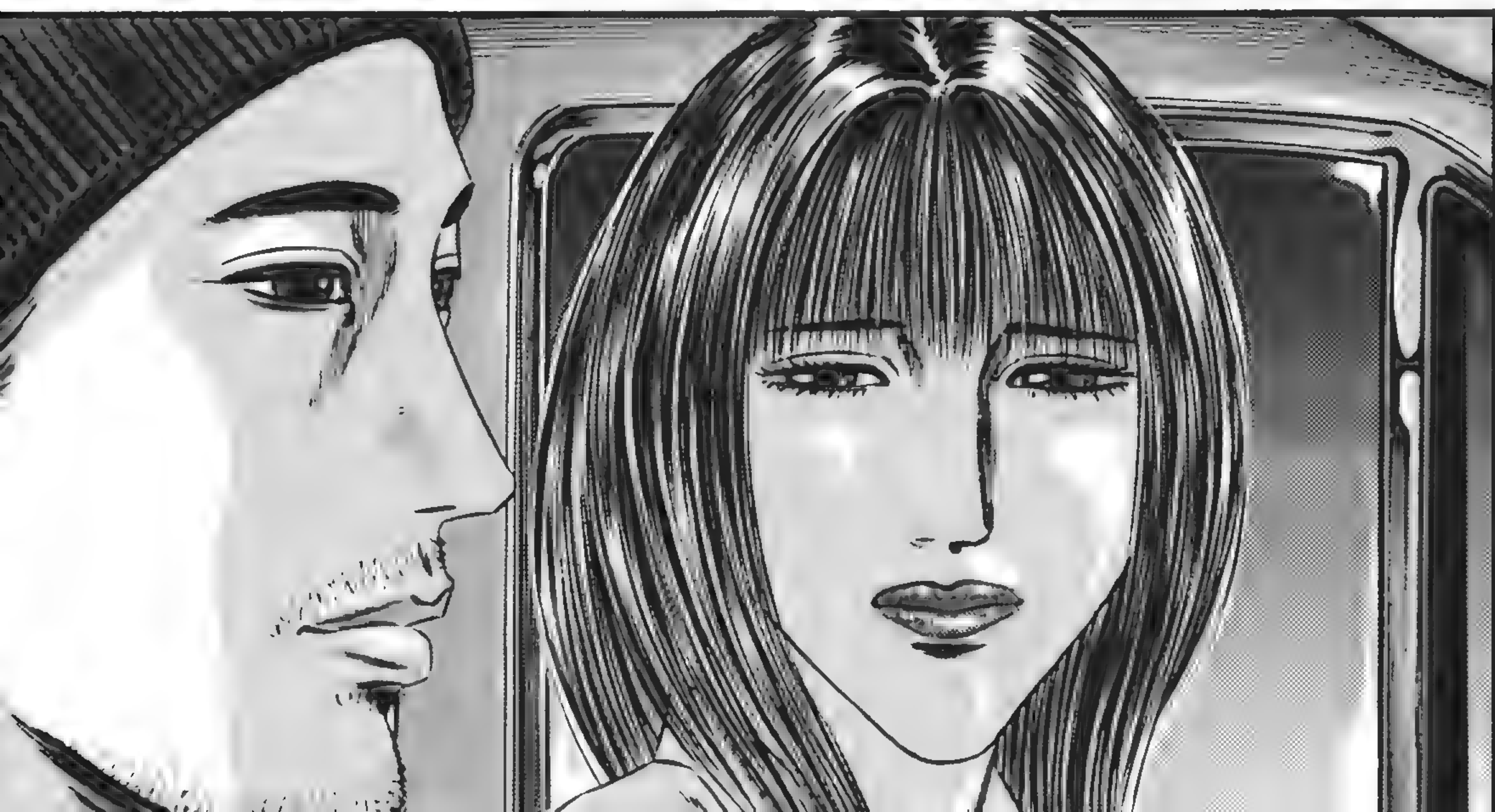
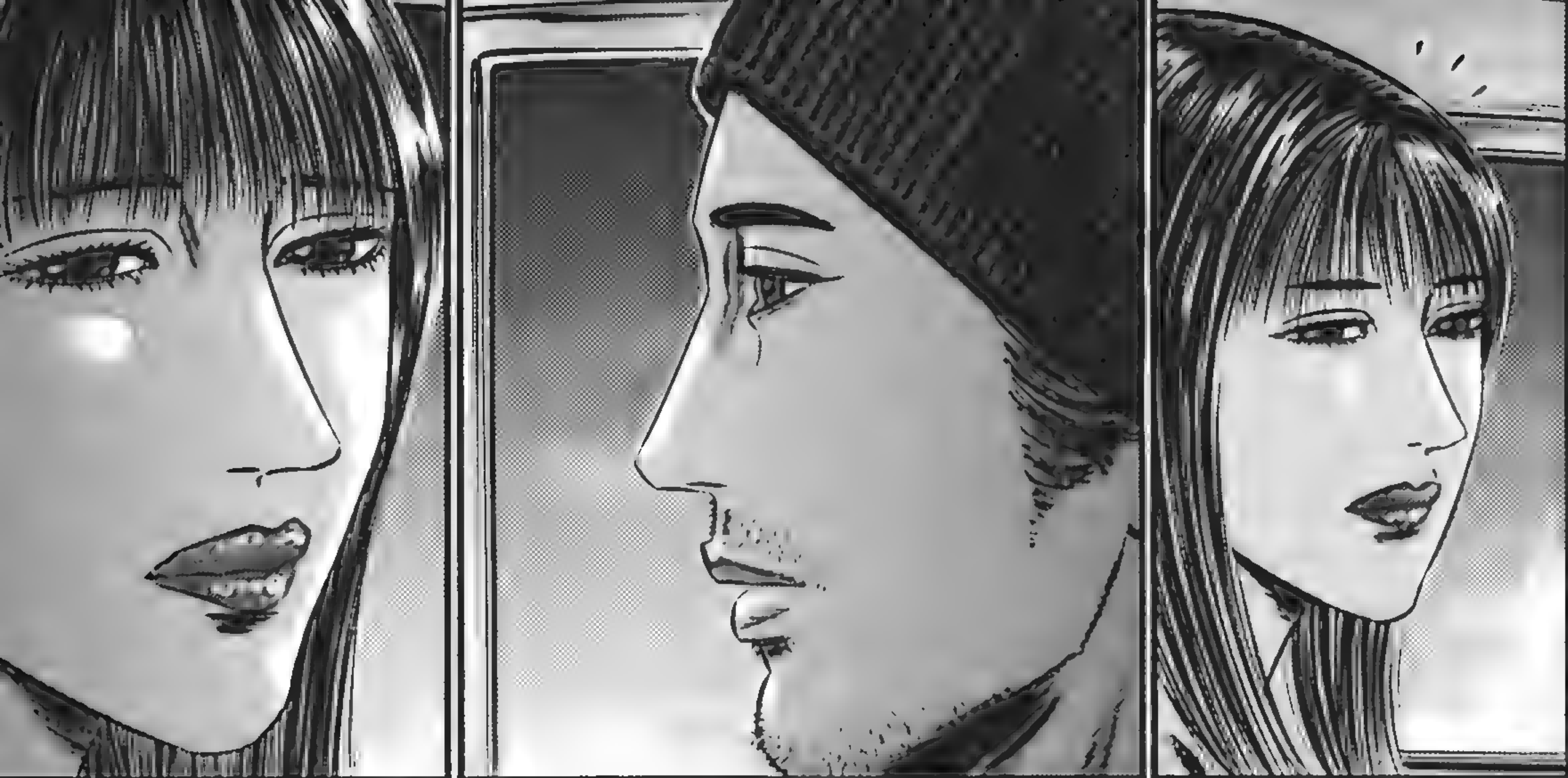
DON'T
WORRY.



I HAVE
A WAY
TO HELP
YOU.



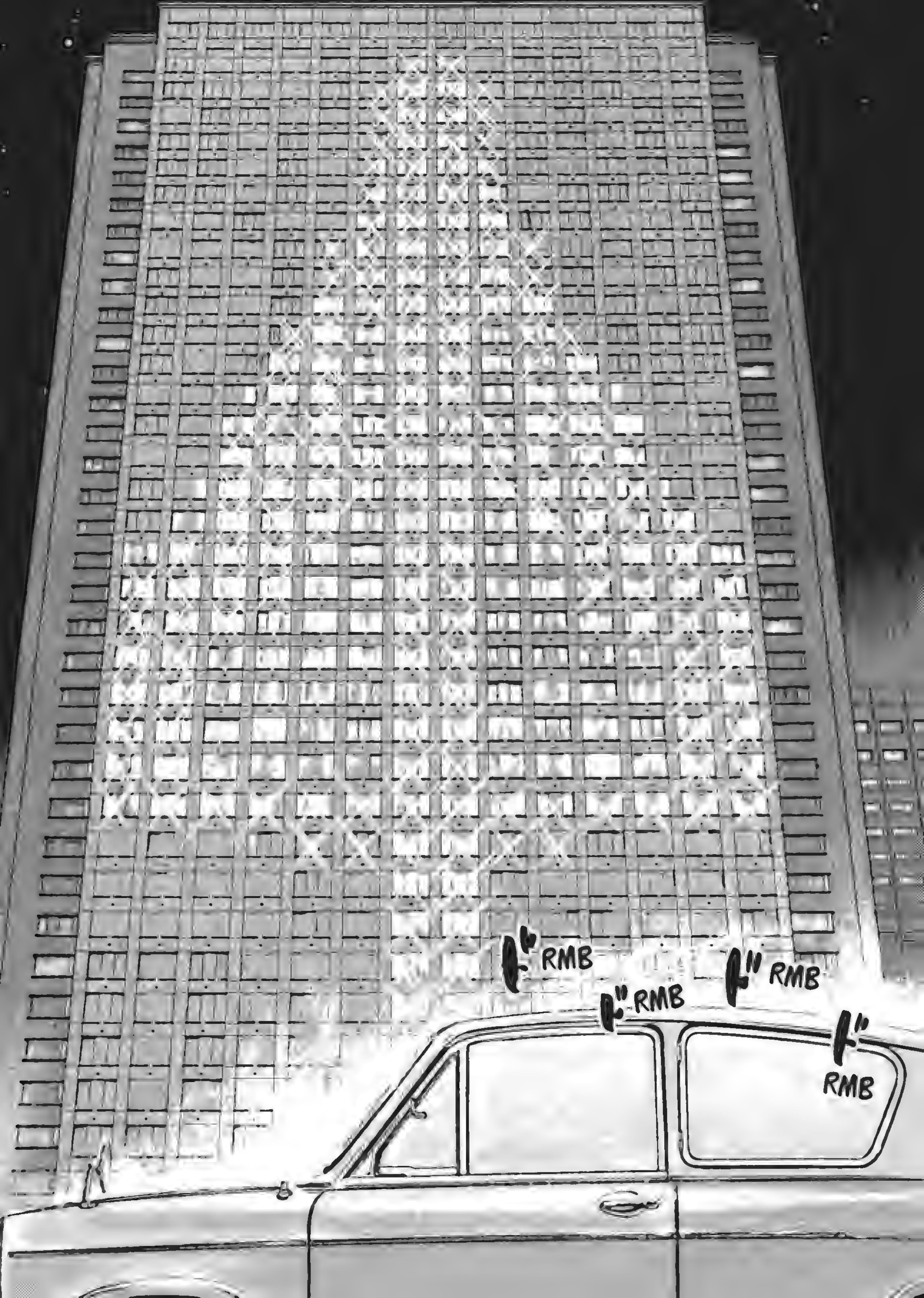






RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB



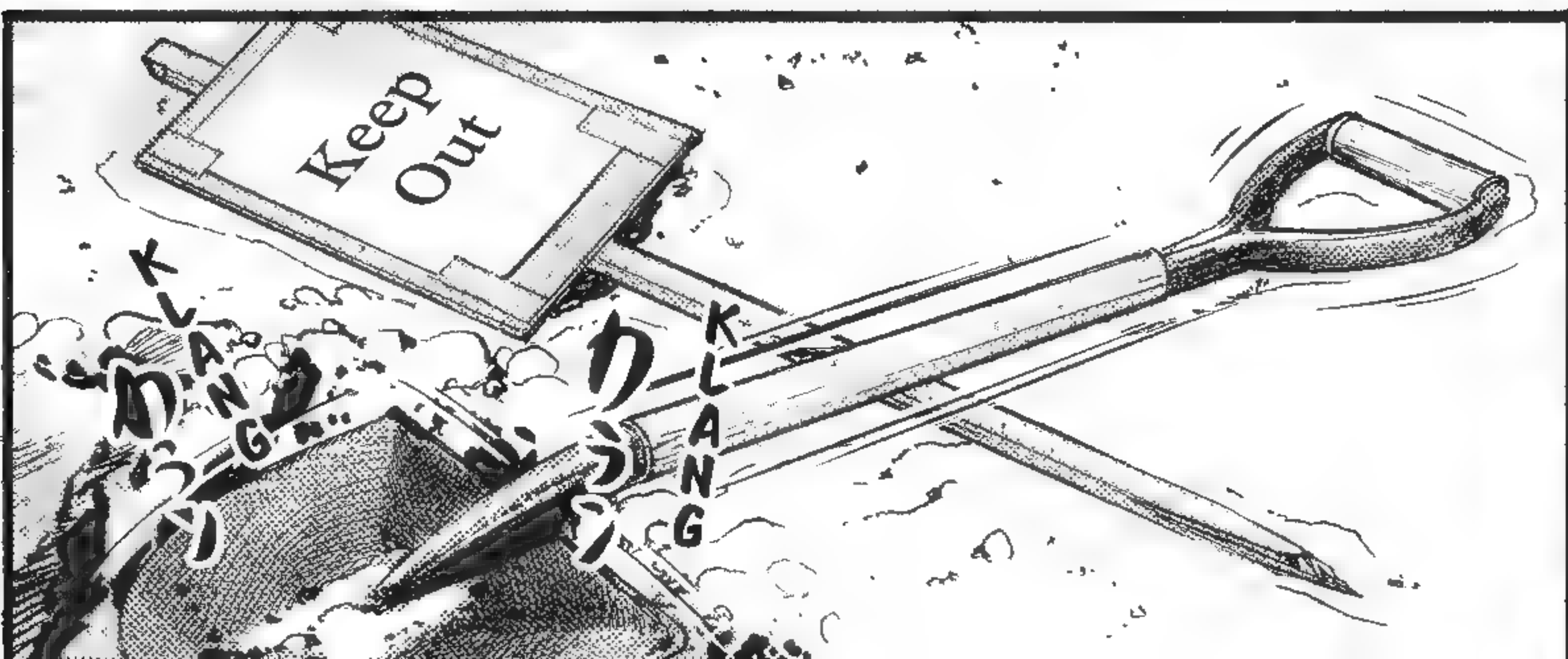
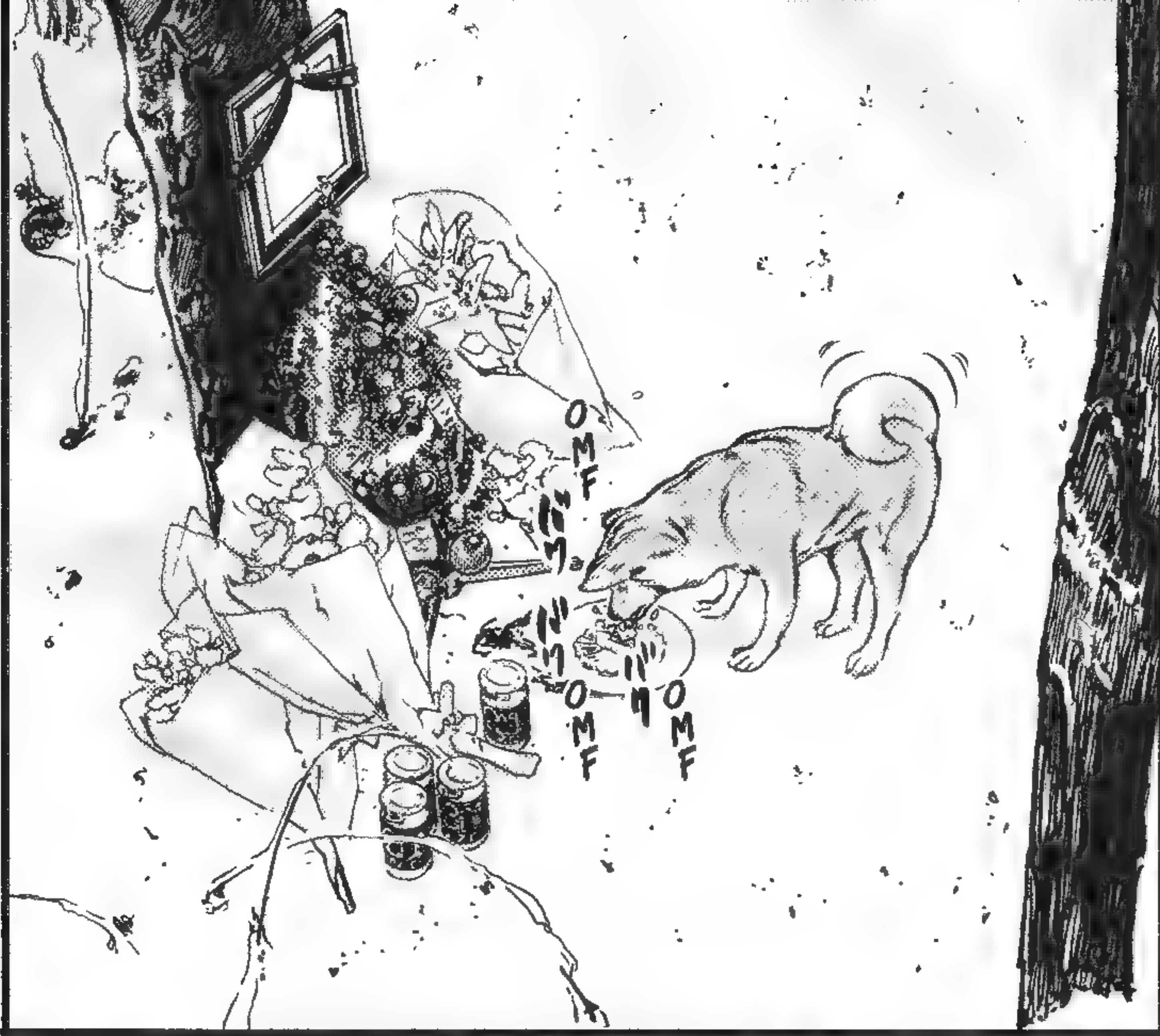


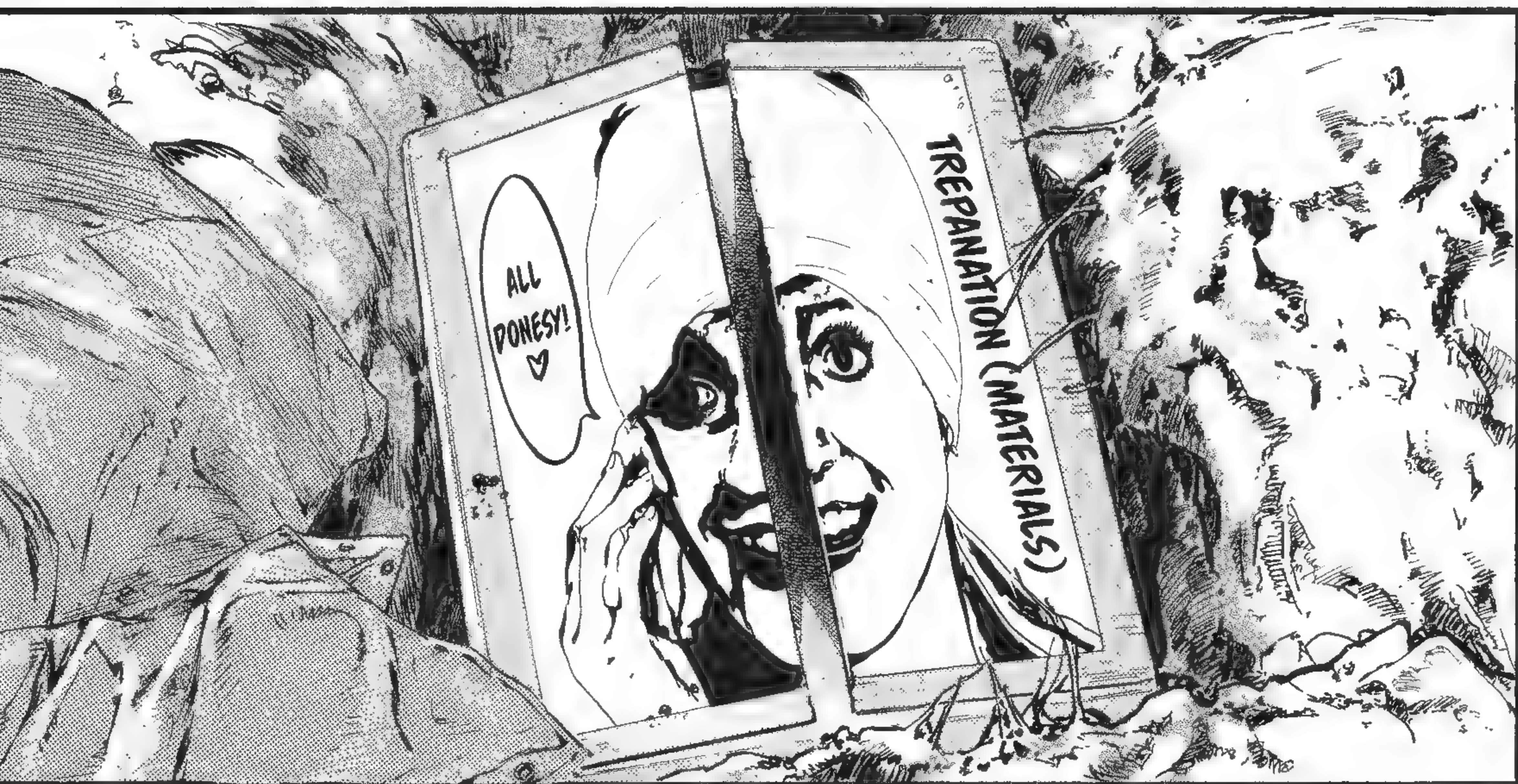






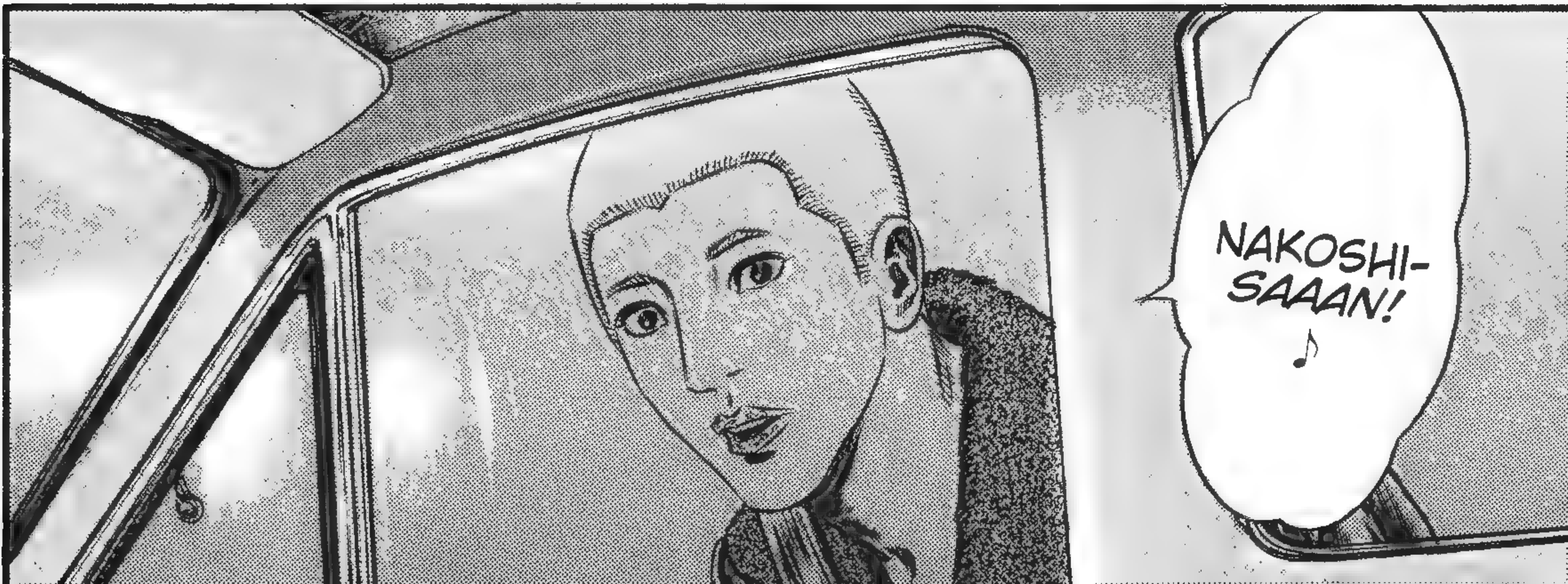














HUH?

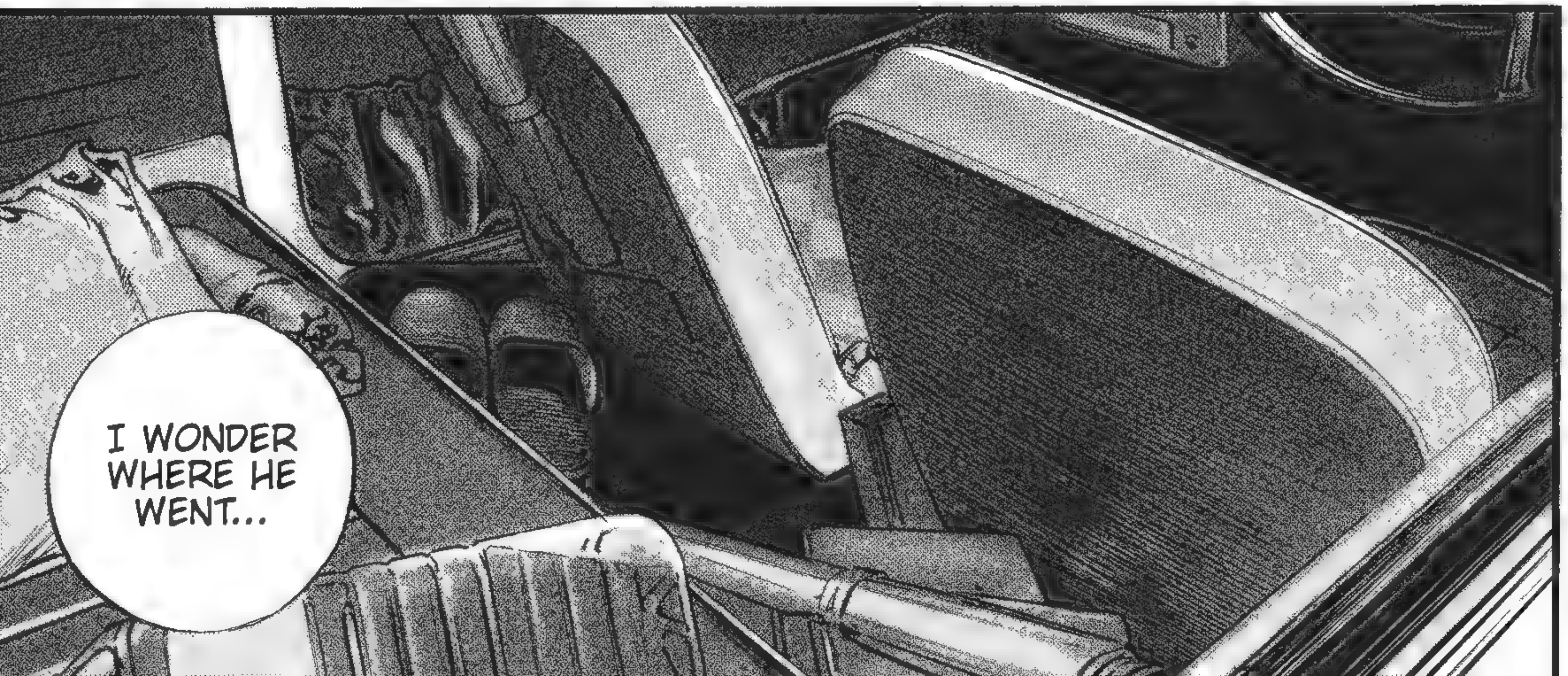
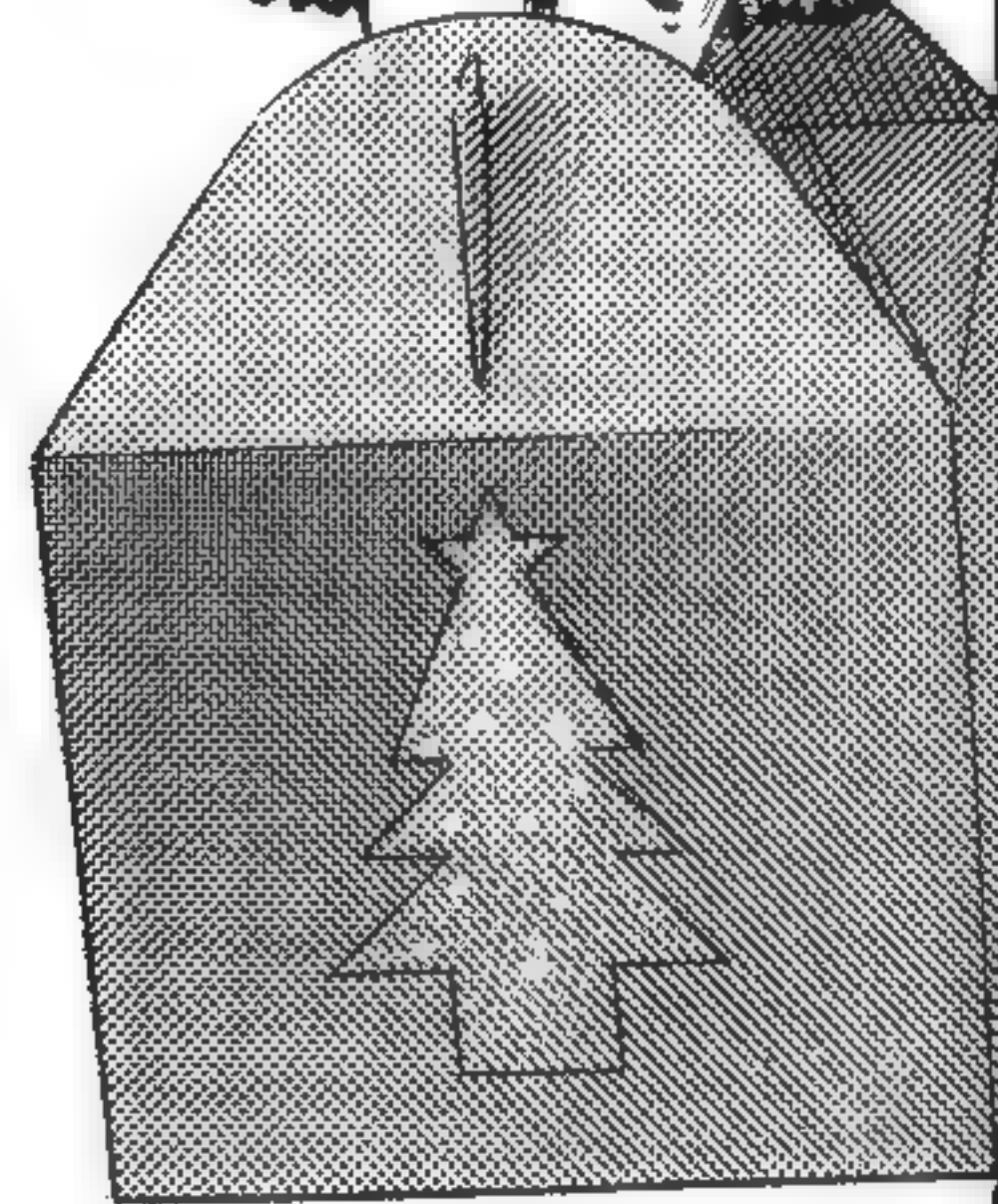
HE'S
GONE...



...

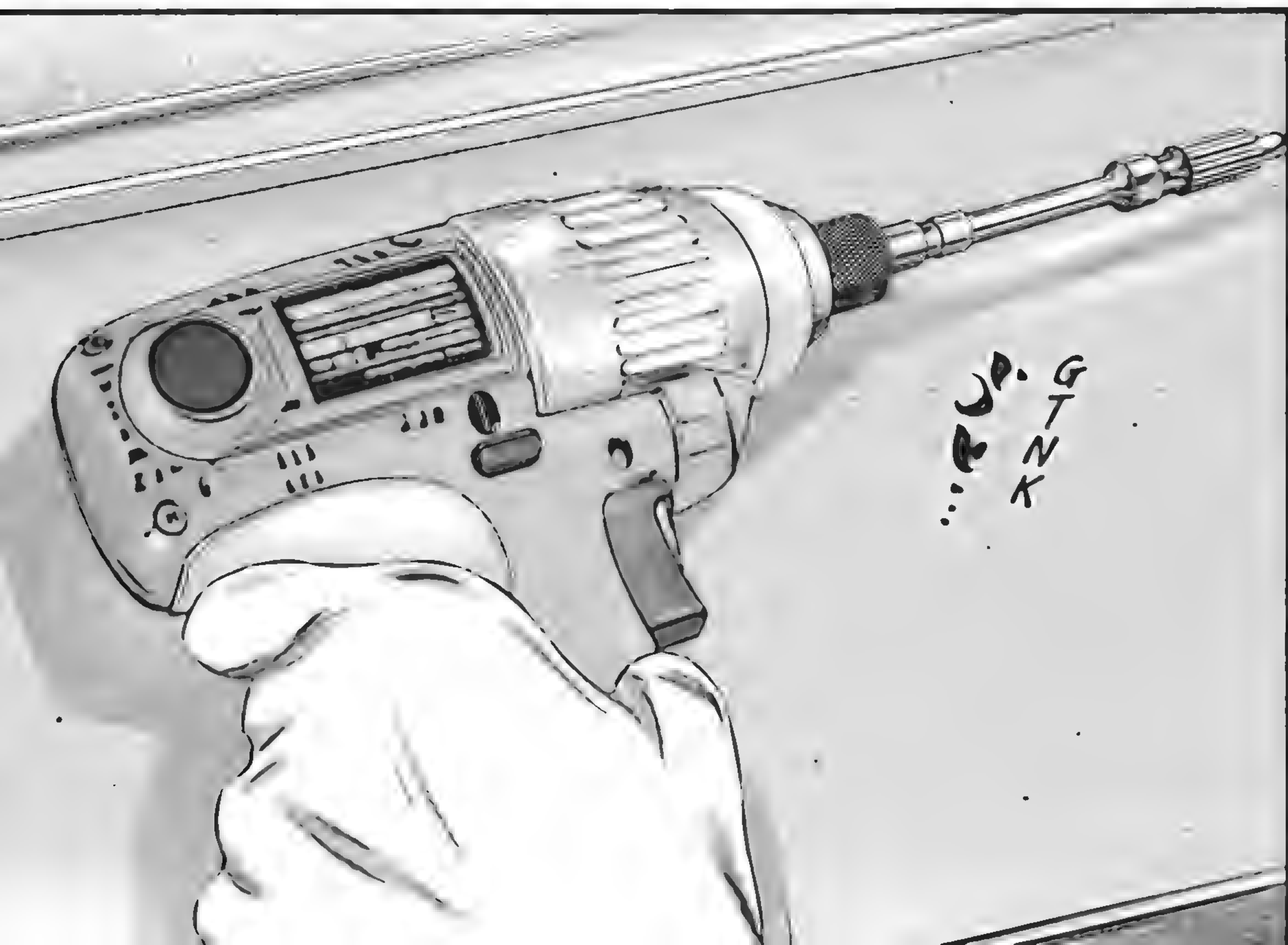
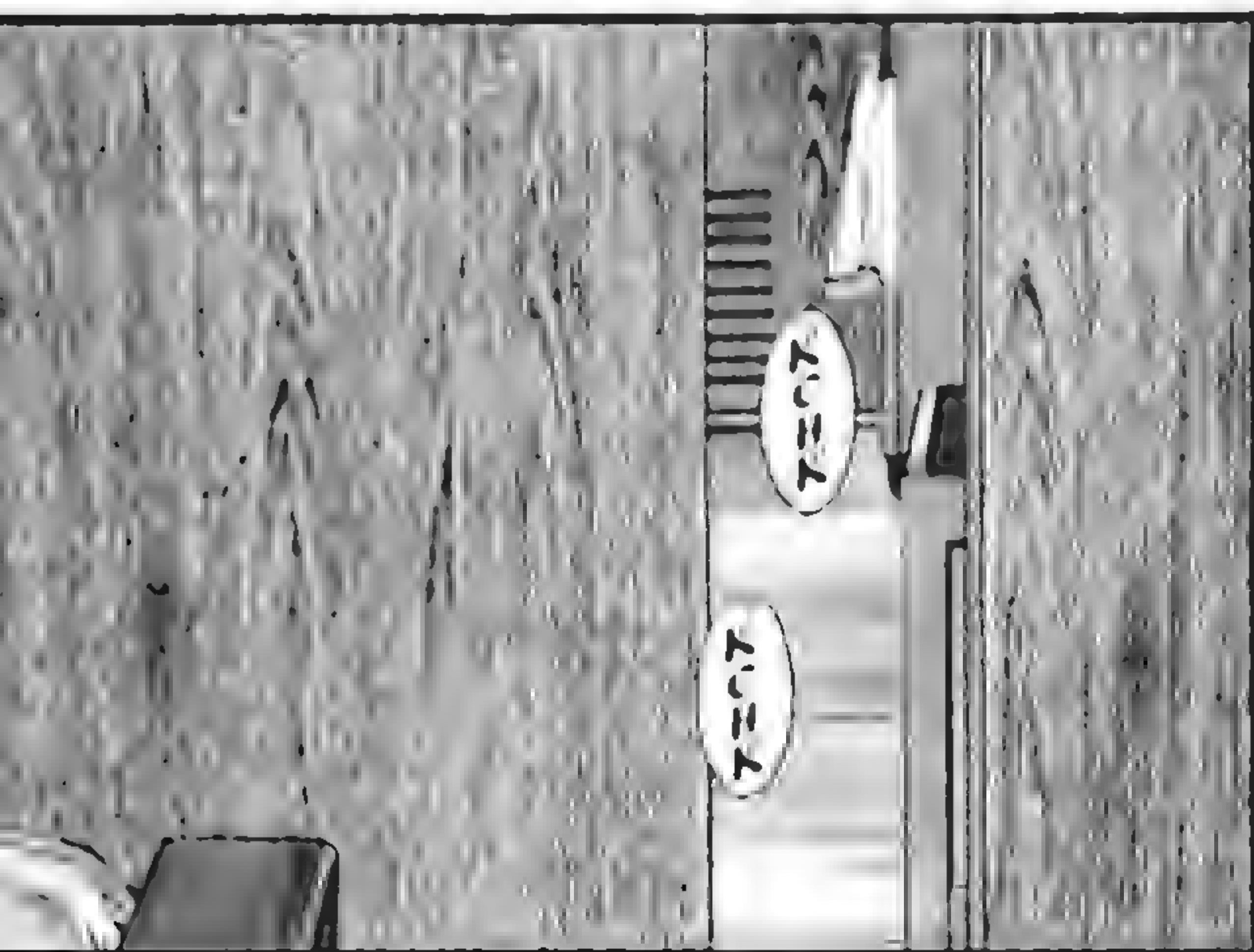
I EVEN
BAKED
ANOTHER
ORGANIC
CAKE...

MAN, I CAME
ALL THIS
WAY, AND
HE'S NOT
EVEN HERE?

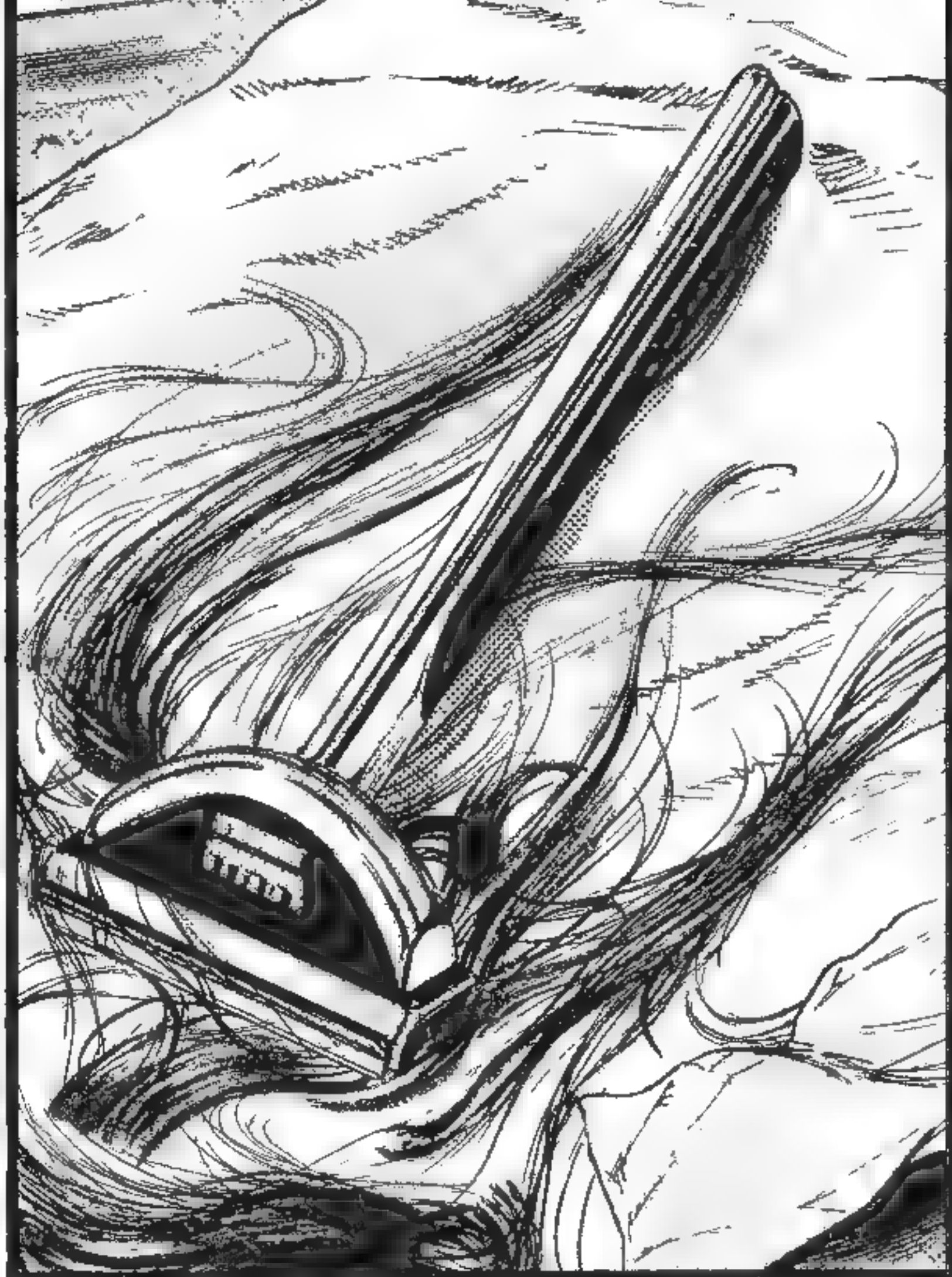


I WONDER
WHERE HE
WENT...







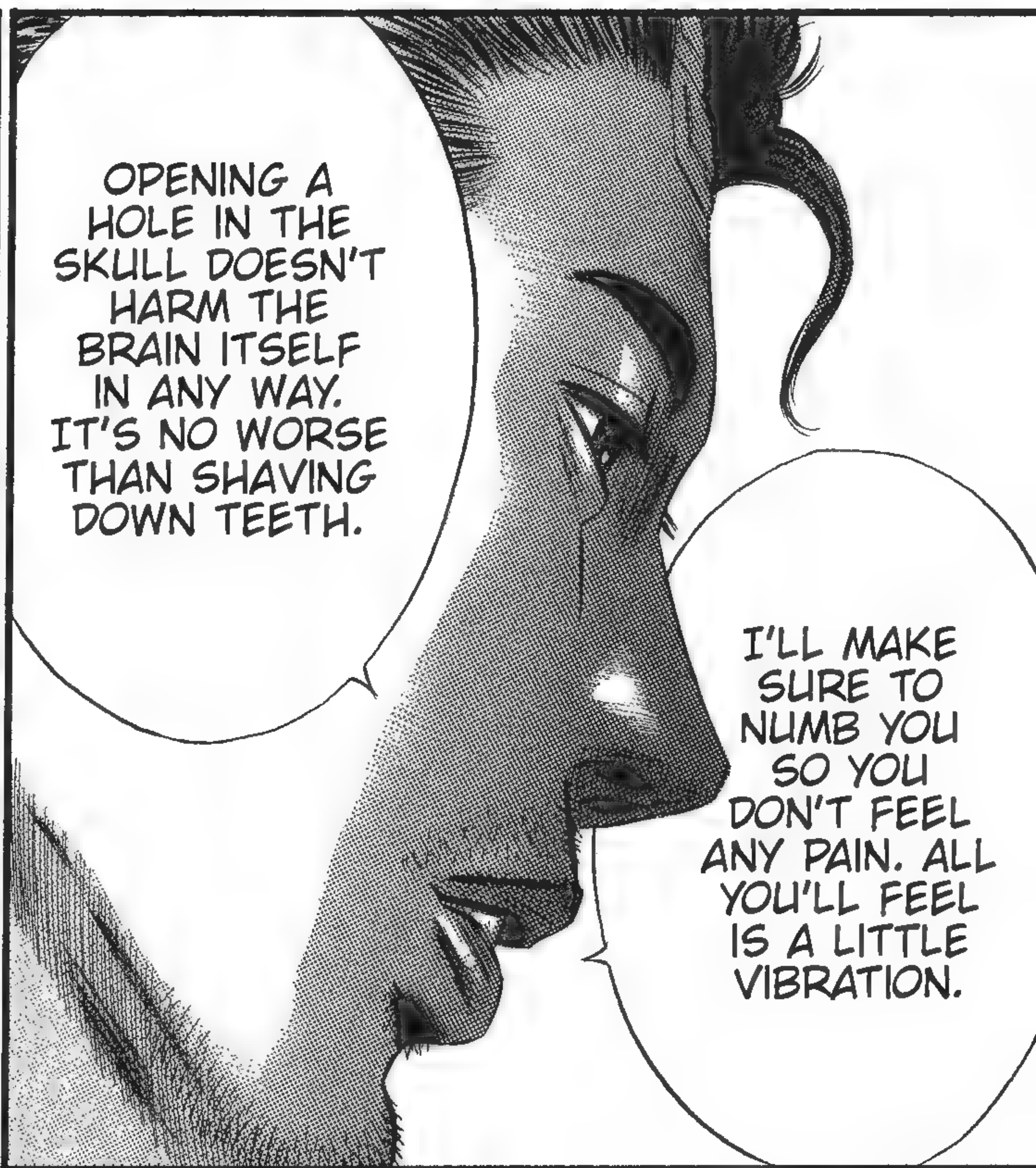




JUST RELAX.



PLENTY OF PEOPLE DO IT OVERSEAS. BESIDES, LOOK AT ME! I'VE HAD IT DONE TWICE, AND I'M JUST FINE.

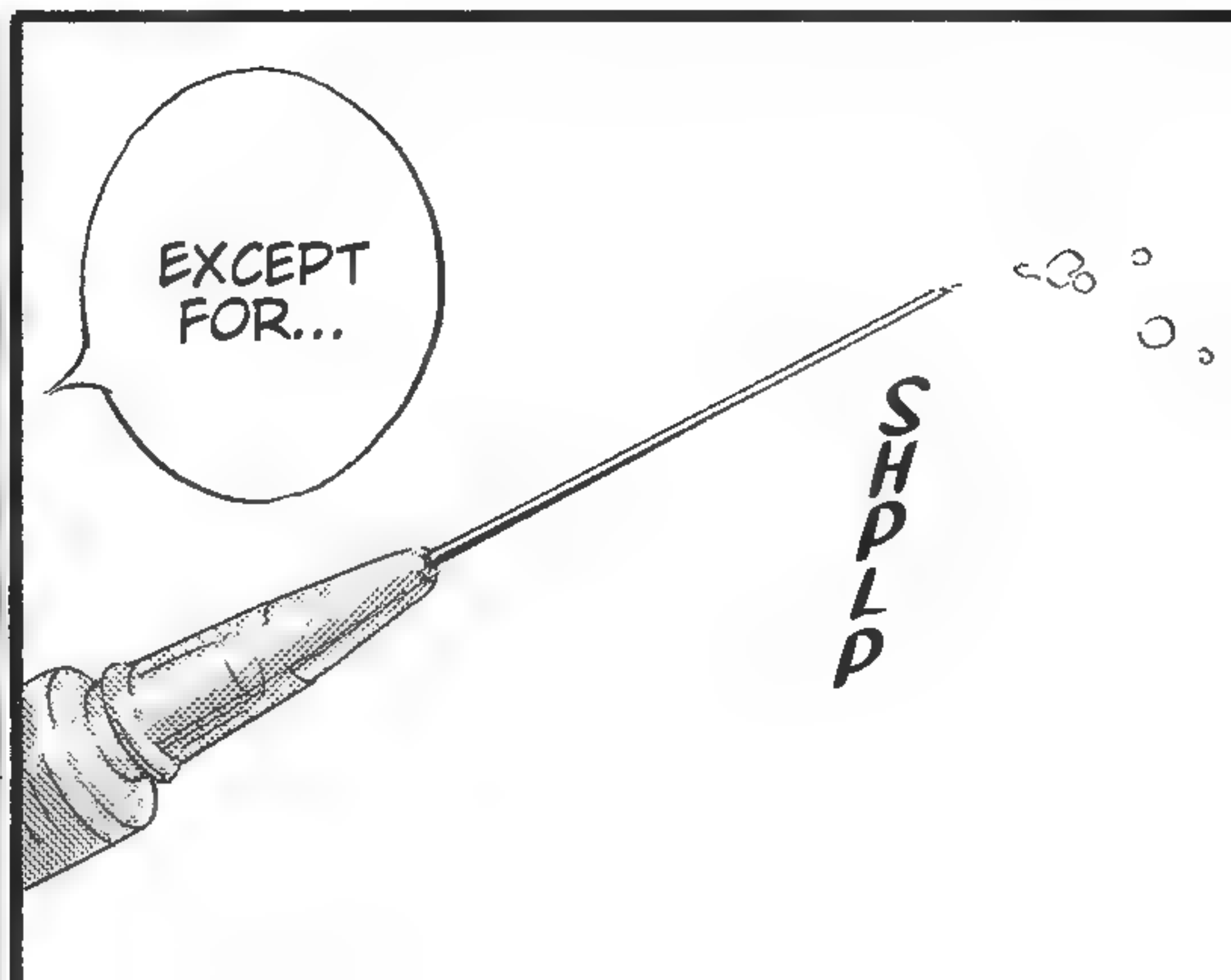


OPENING A HOLE IN THE SKULL DOESN'T HARM THE BRAIN ITSELF IN ANY WAY. IT'S NO WORSE THAN SHAVING DOWN TEETH.

I'LL MAKE SURE TO NUMB YOU SO YOU DON'T FEEL ANY PAIN. ALL YOU'LL FEEL IS A LITTLE VIBRATION.

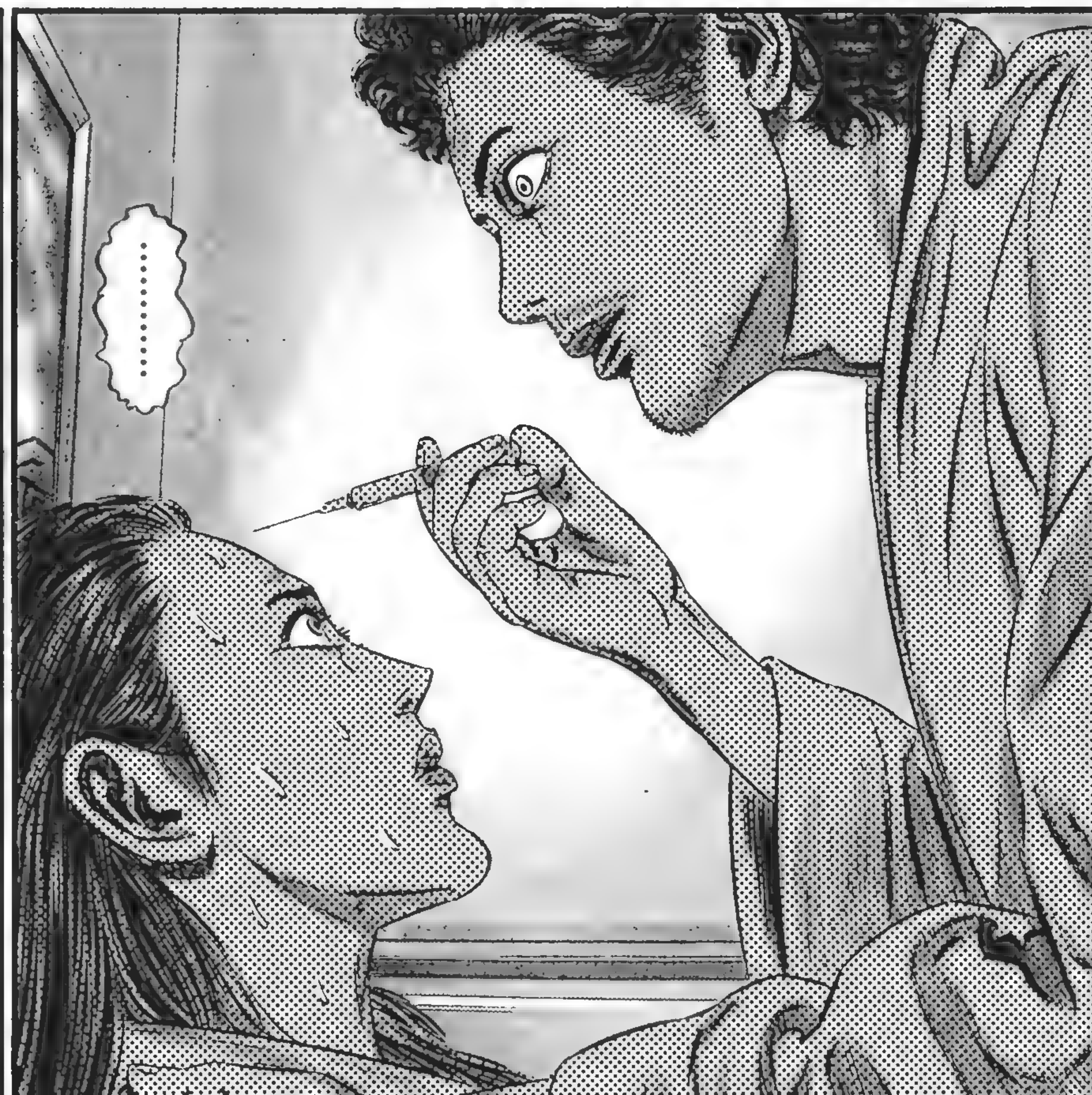


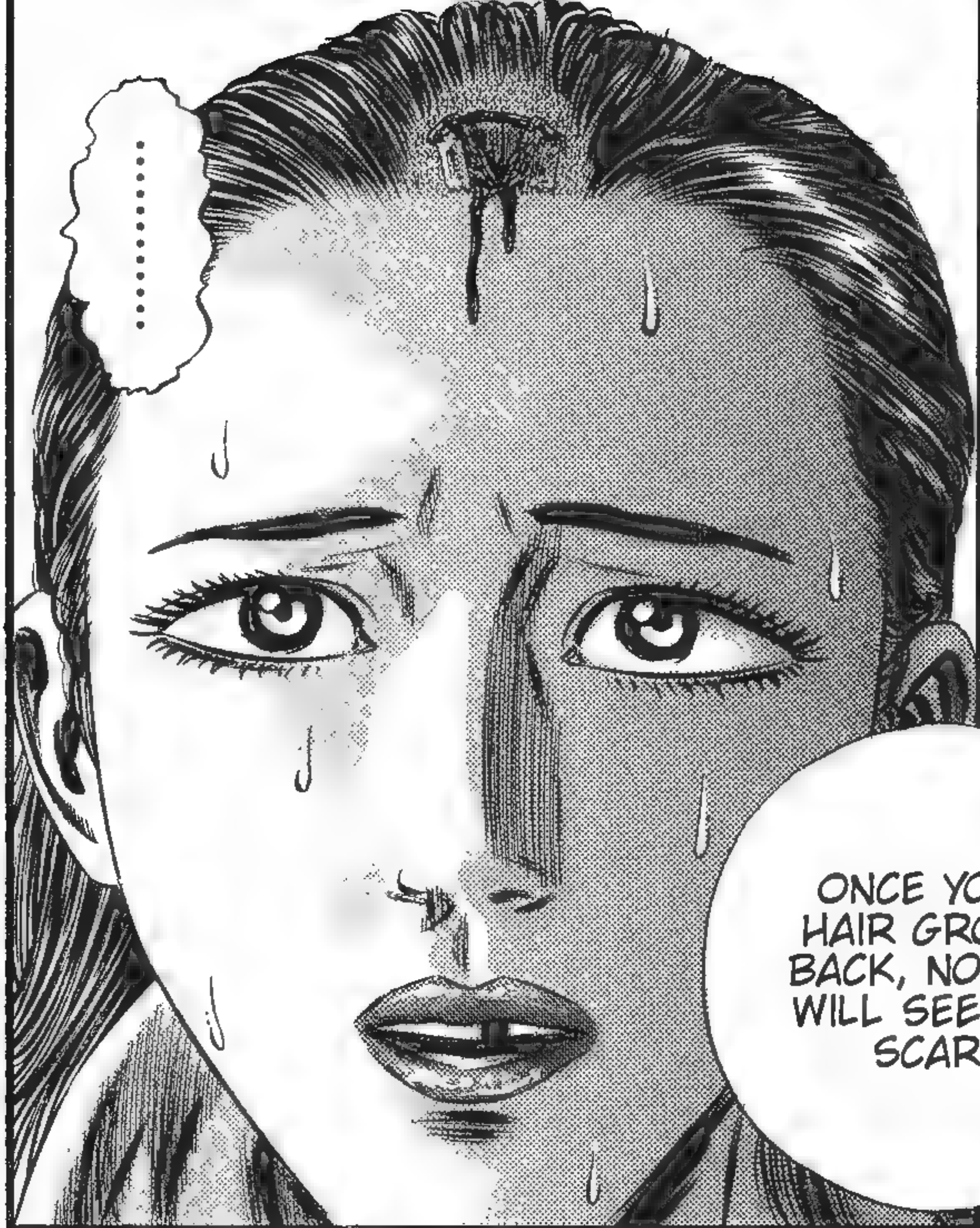
FOR WHAT?



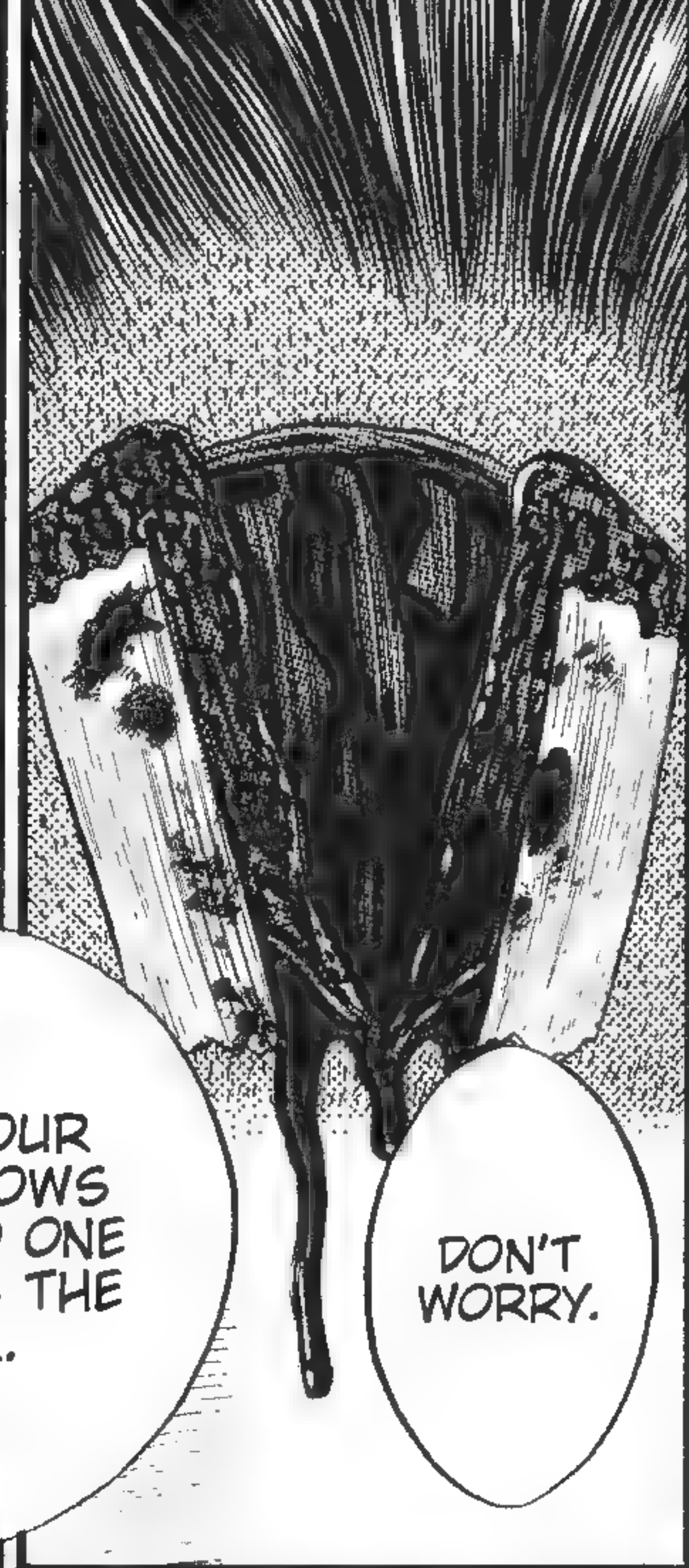
EXCEPT FOR...

SHPLP





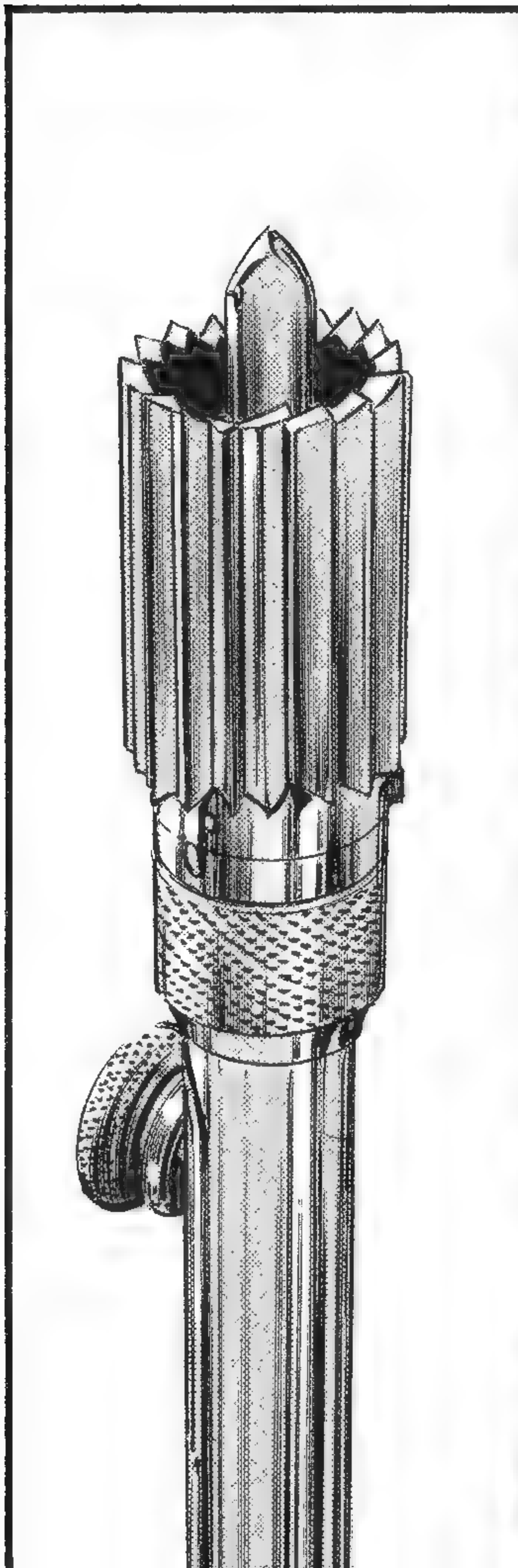
ONCE YOUR
HAIR GROWS
BACK, NO ONE
WILL SEE THE
SCAR.



DON'T
WORRY.



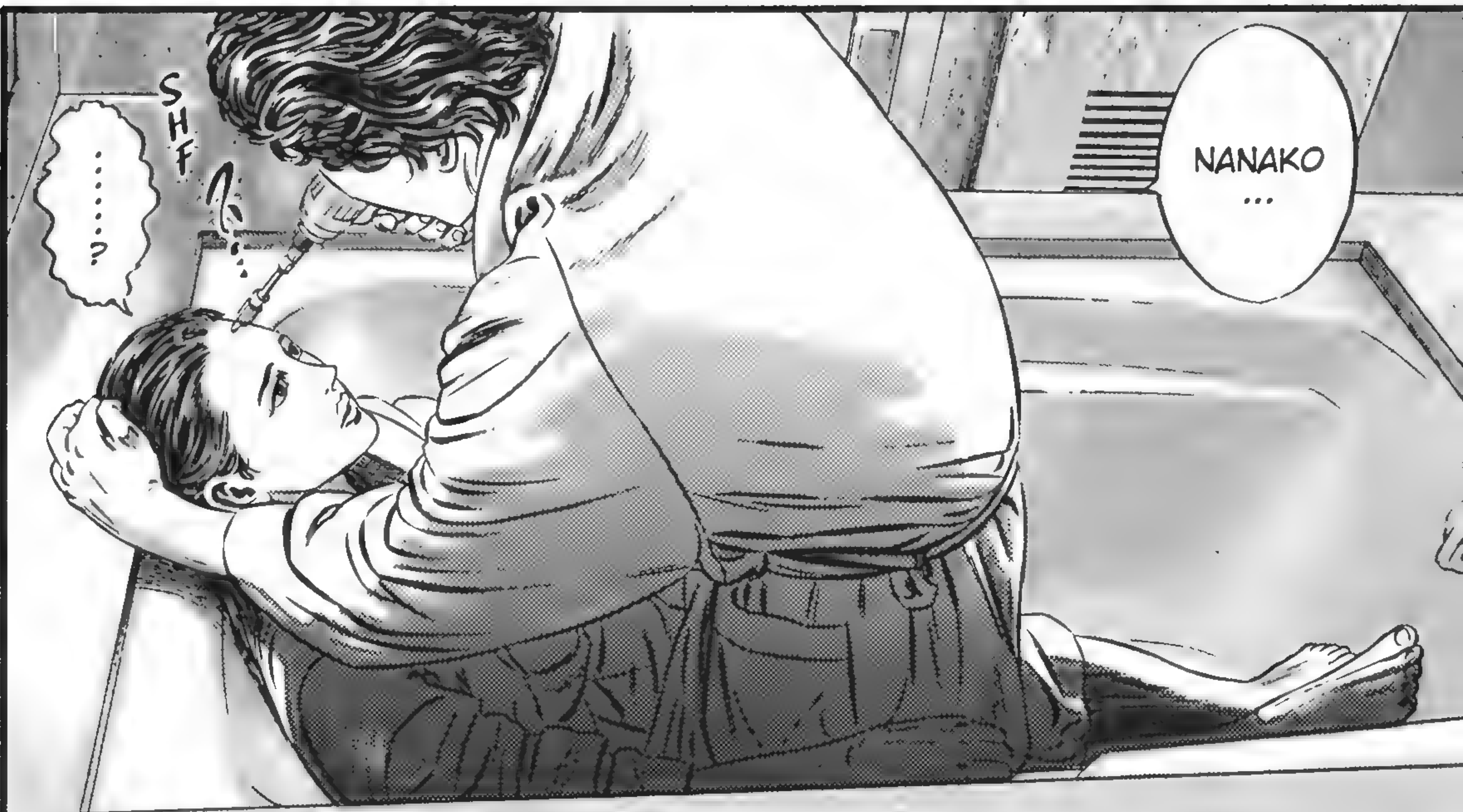
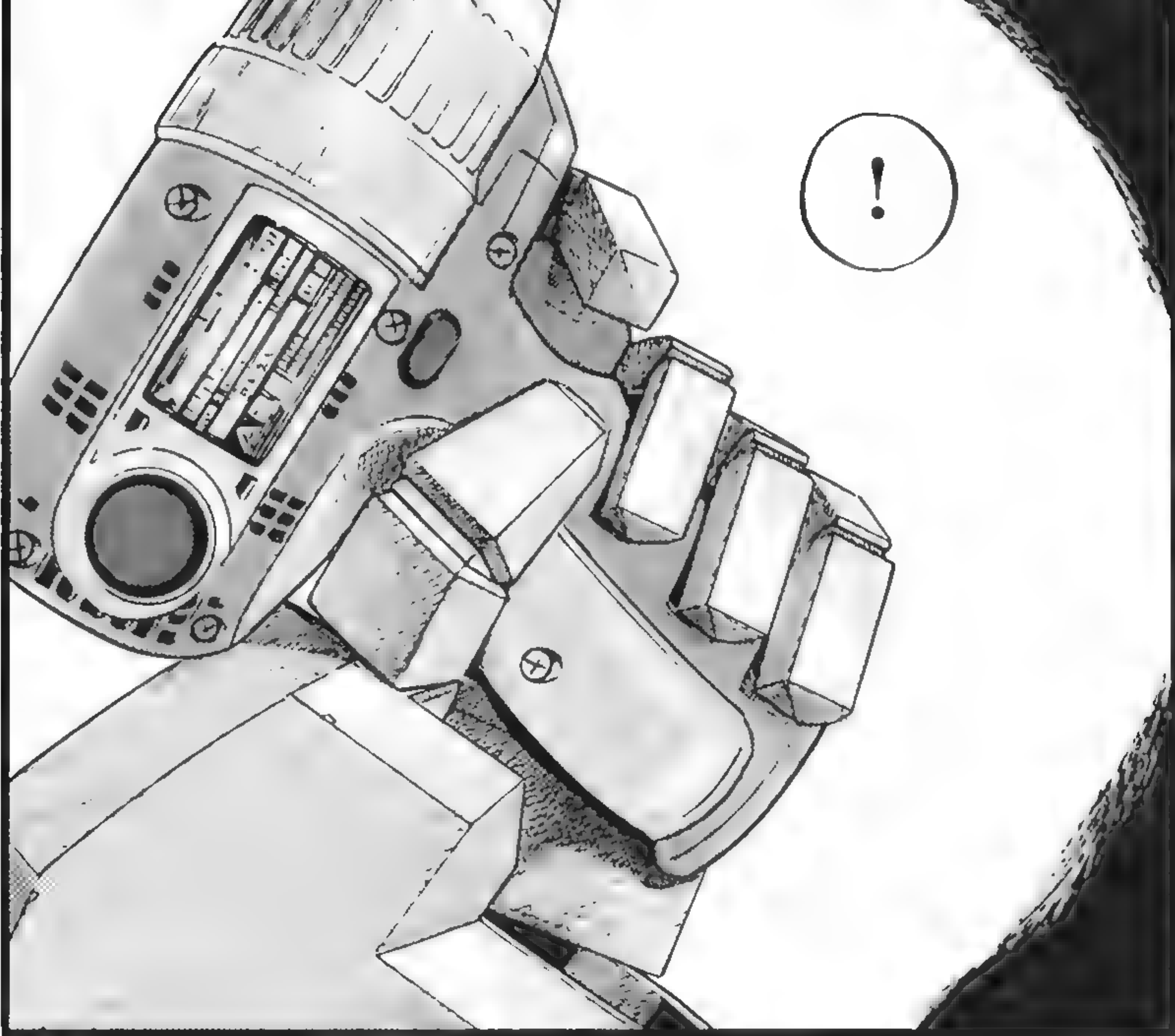
THERE.
PERFECT.

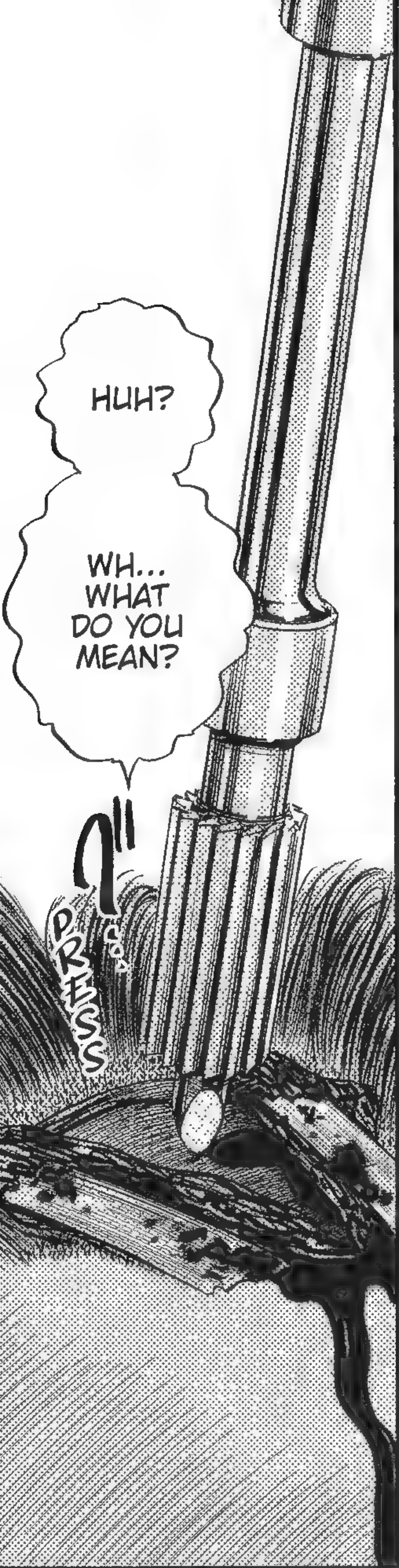


NOW
THEN...







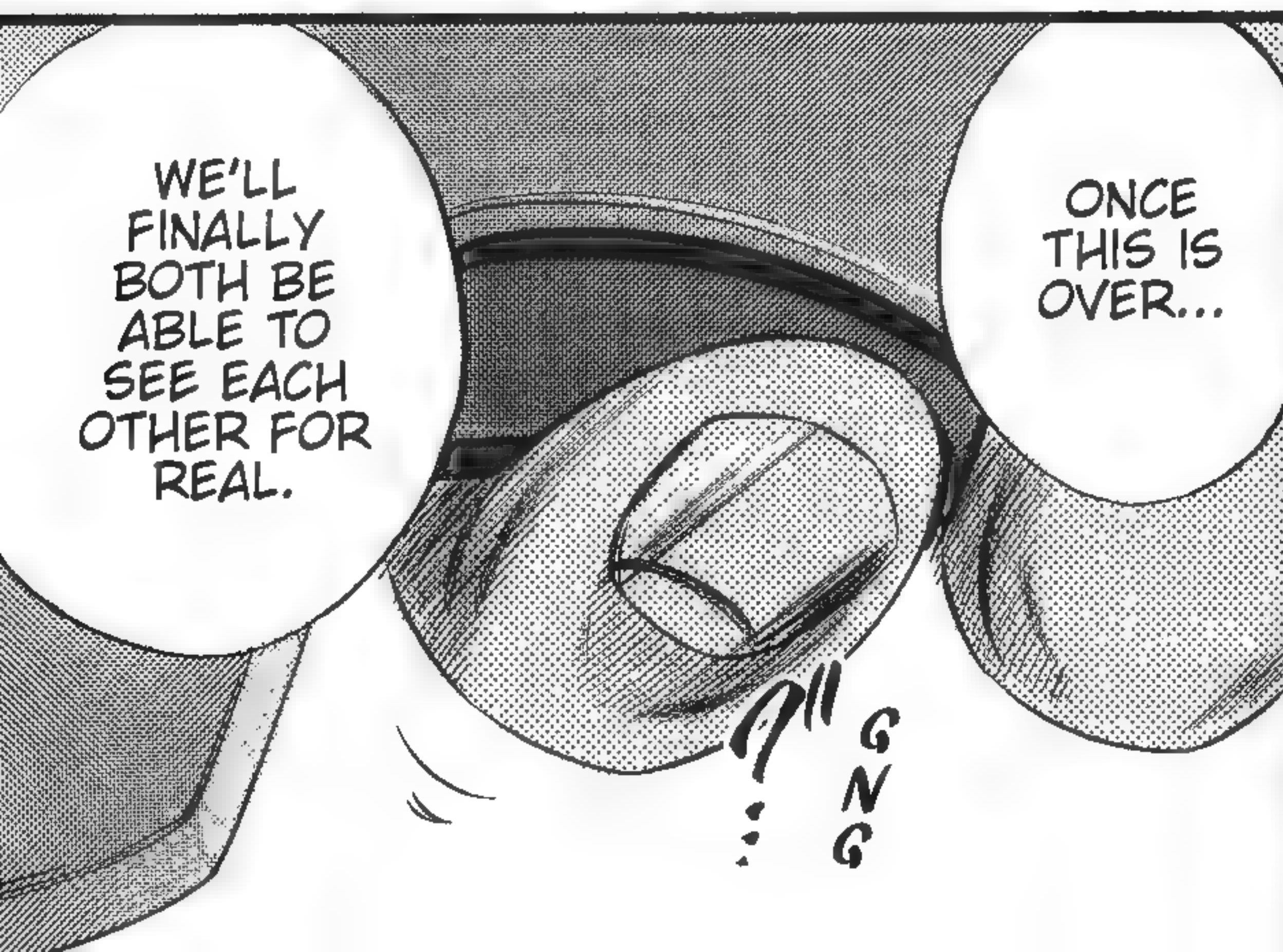


HUH?

WH...
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



I NEED YOU
TO TAKE A
LOOK AT
SOMETHING
FOR ME.



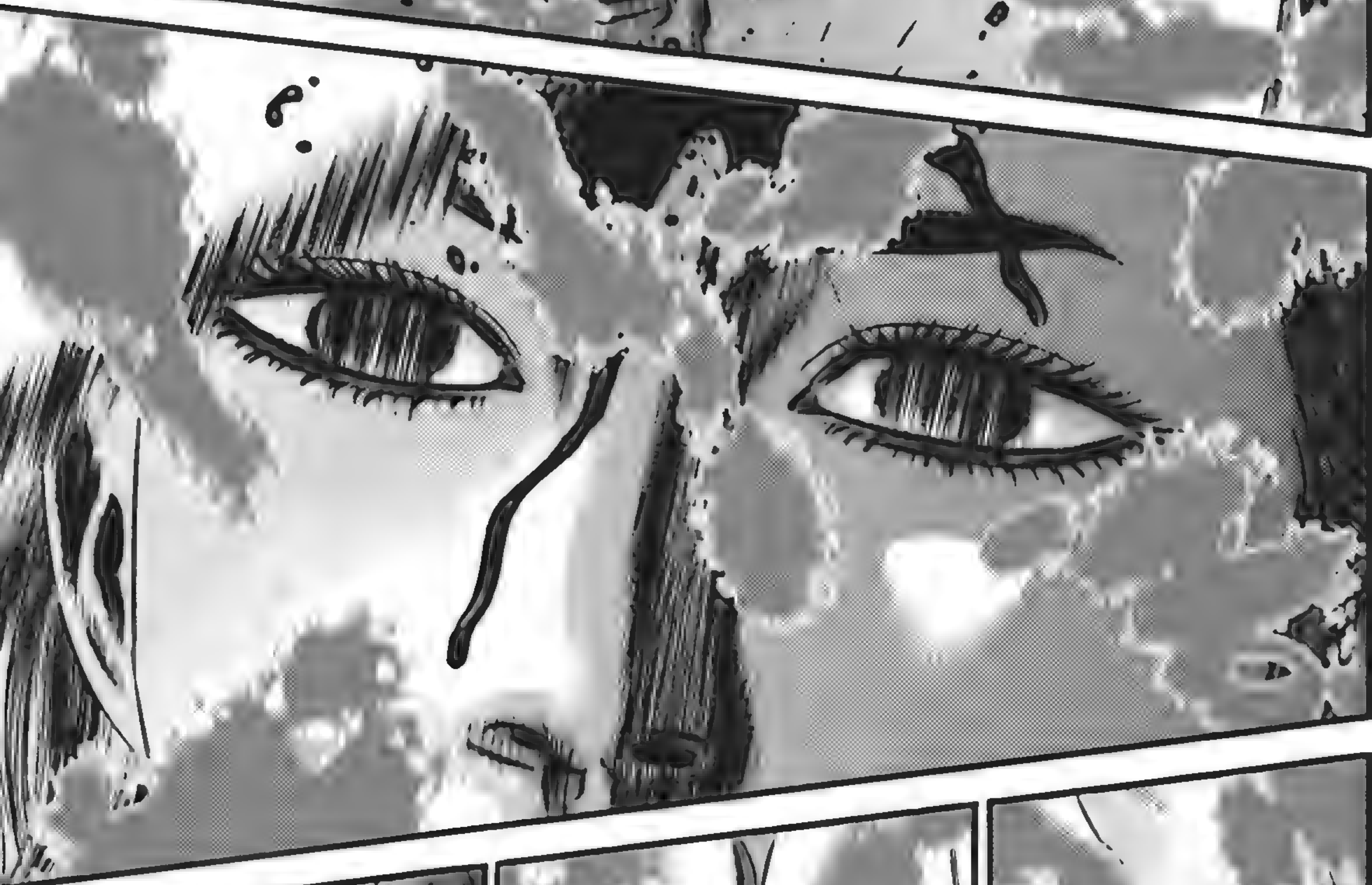
WE'LL
FINALLY
BOTH BE
ABLE TO
SEE EACH
OTHER FOR
REAL.

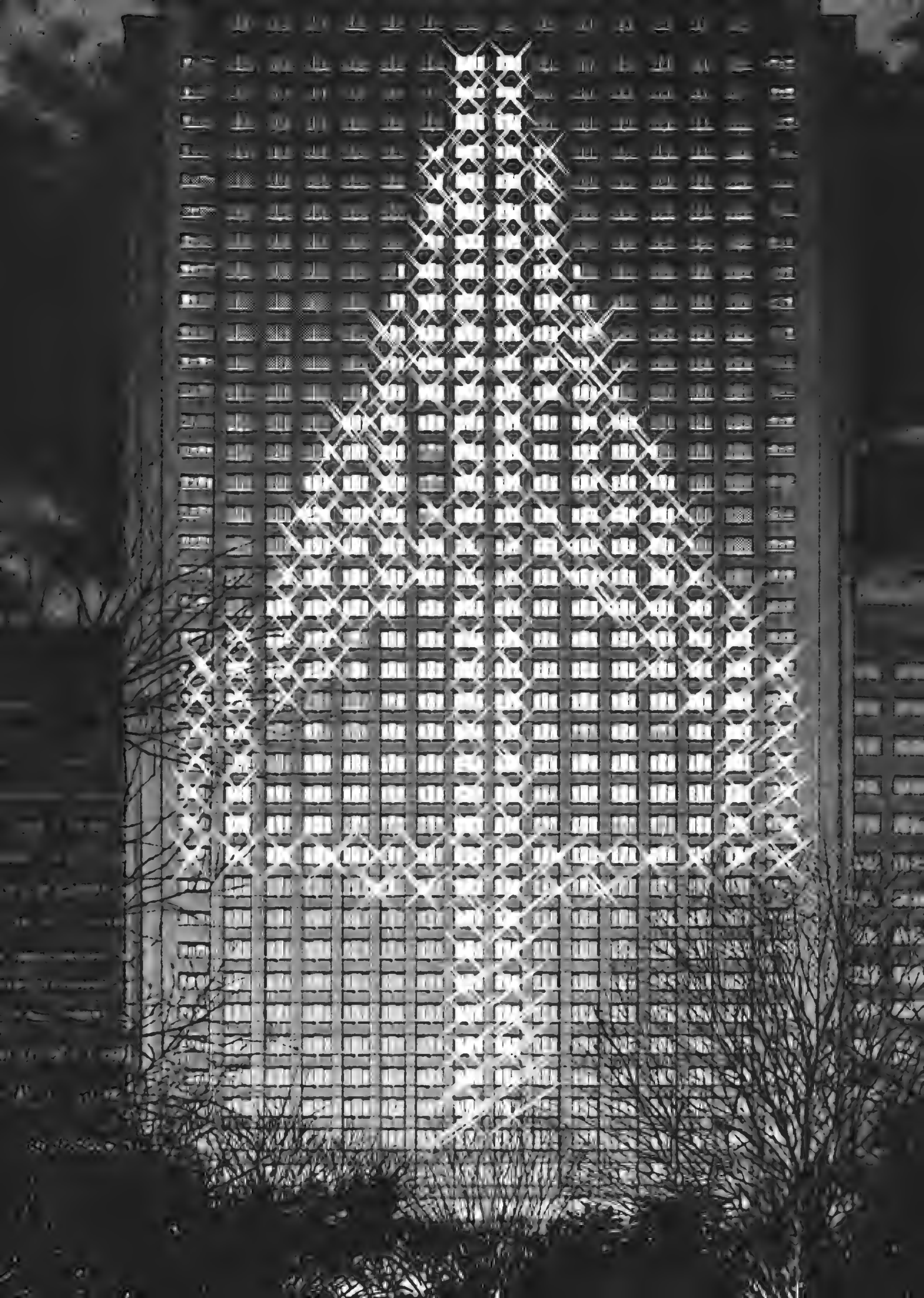
ONCE
THIS IS
OVER...

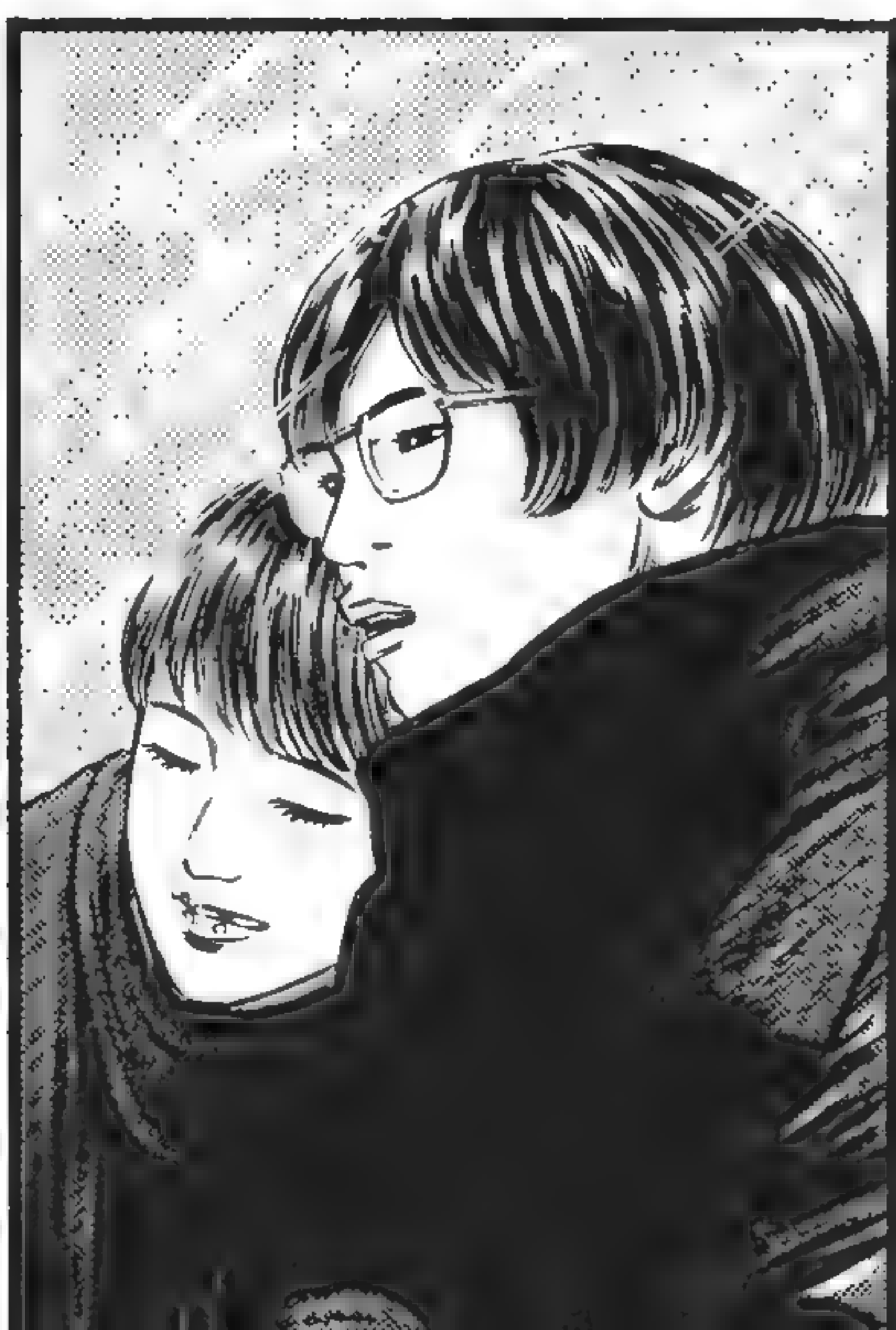


RELAX.
IT'S
OKAY.

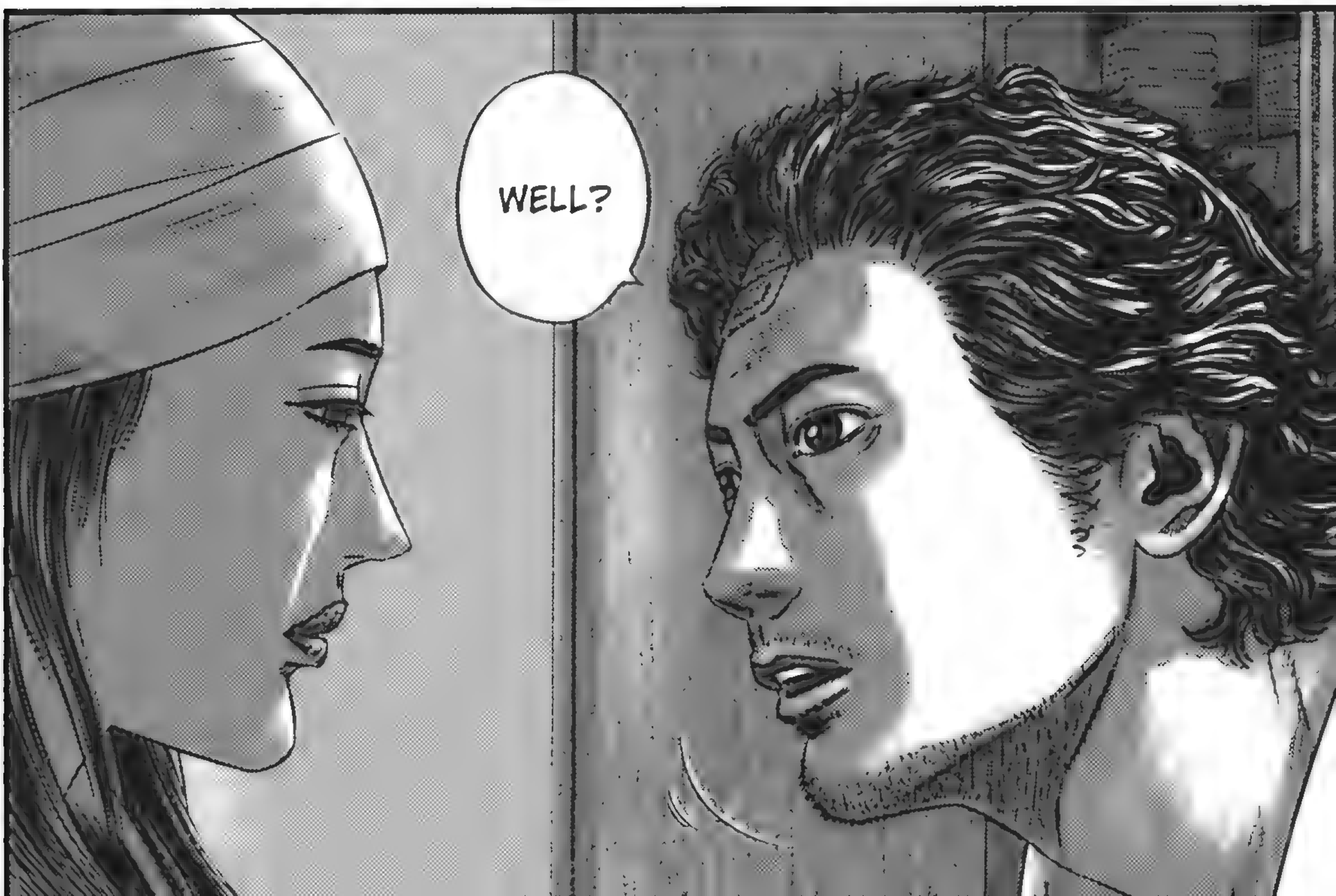


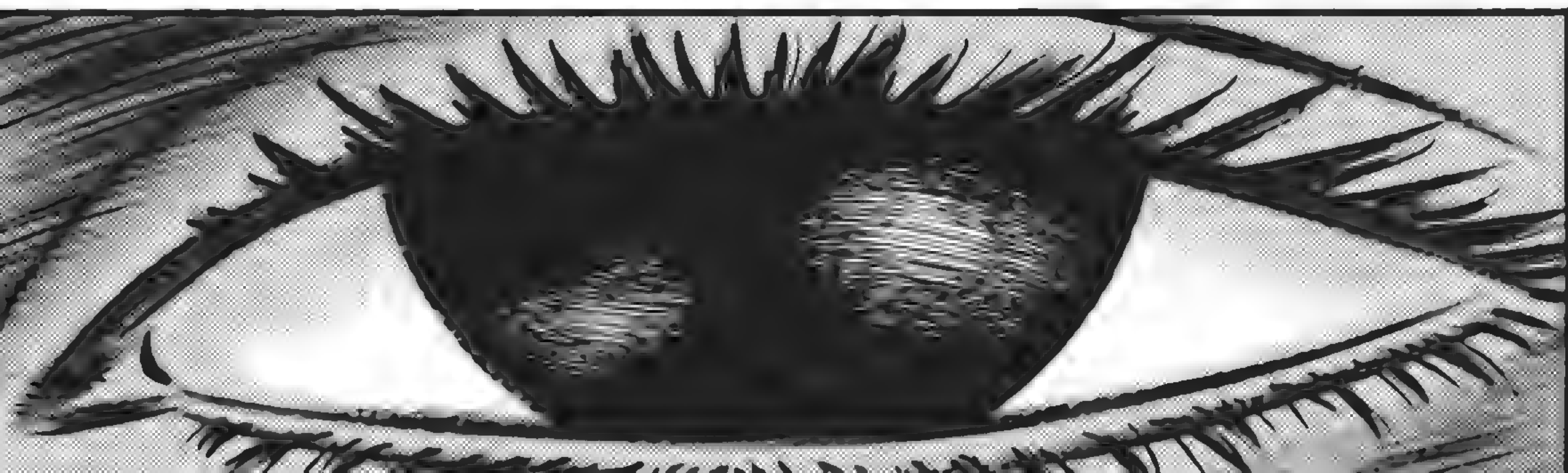


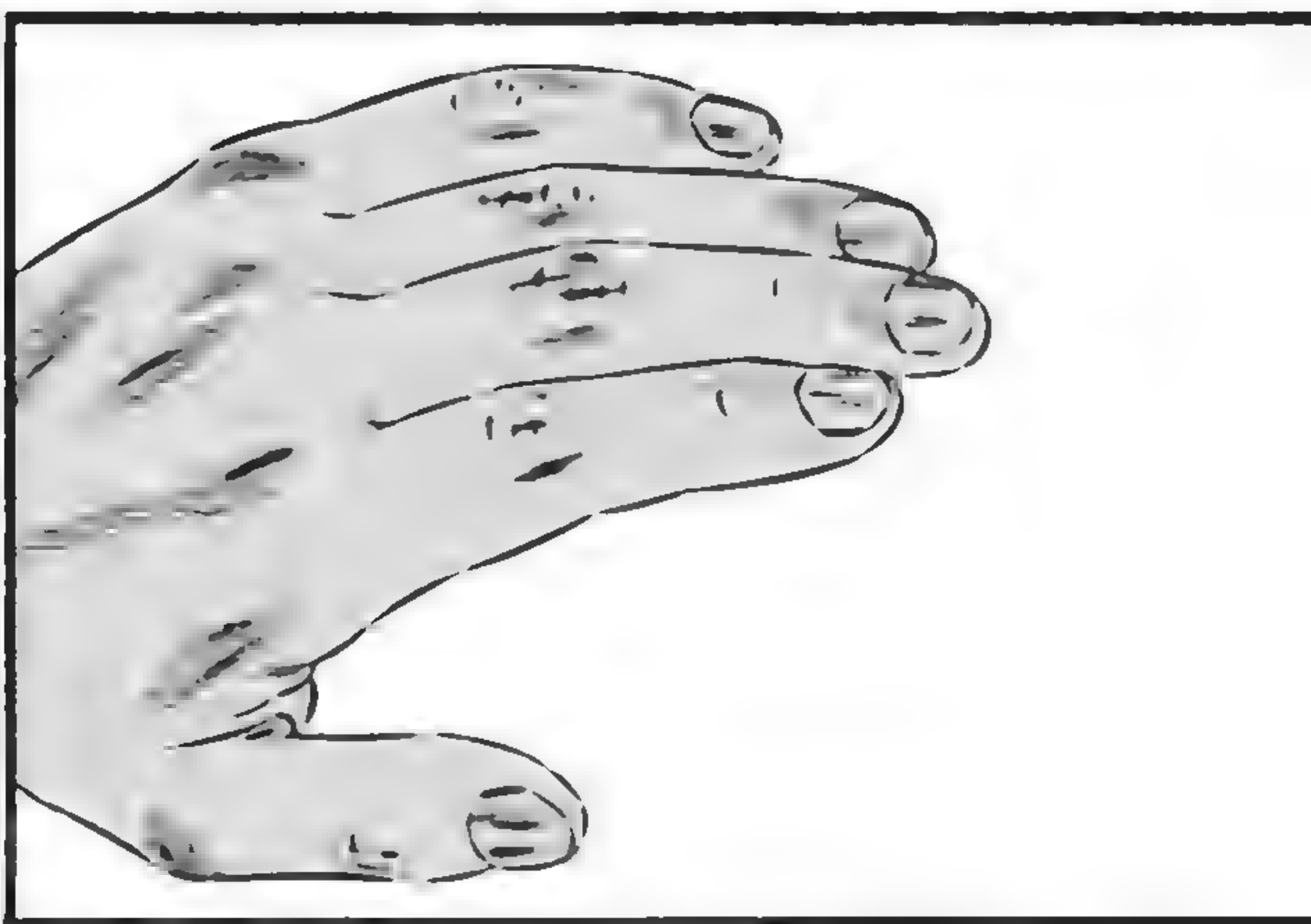
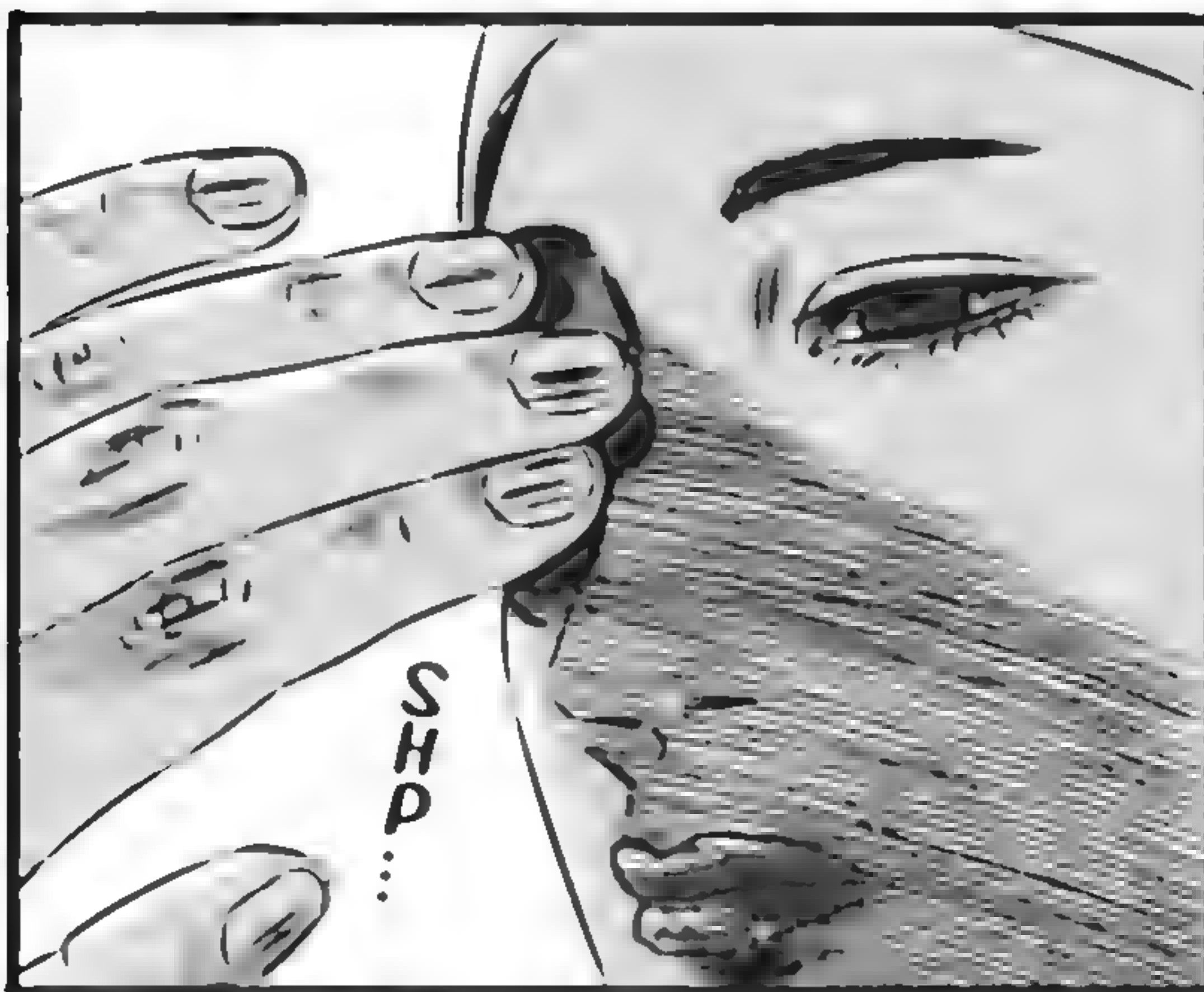


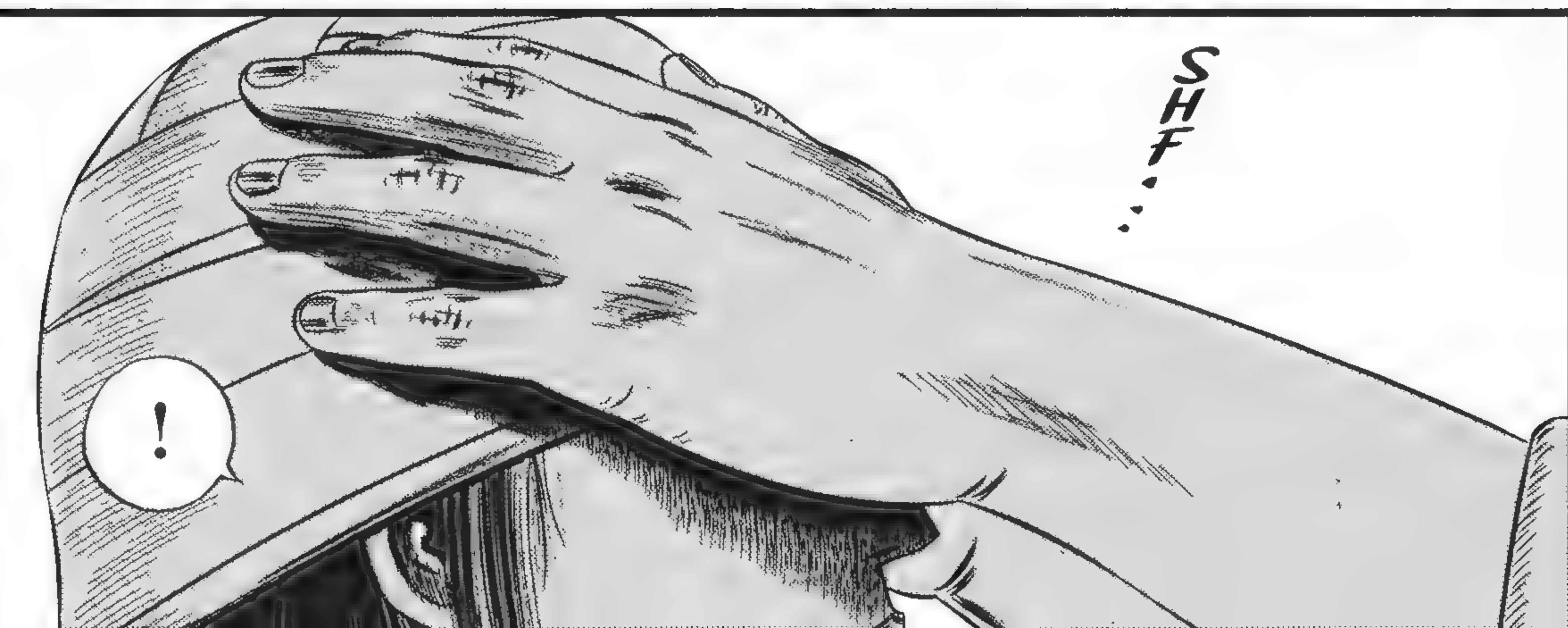
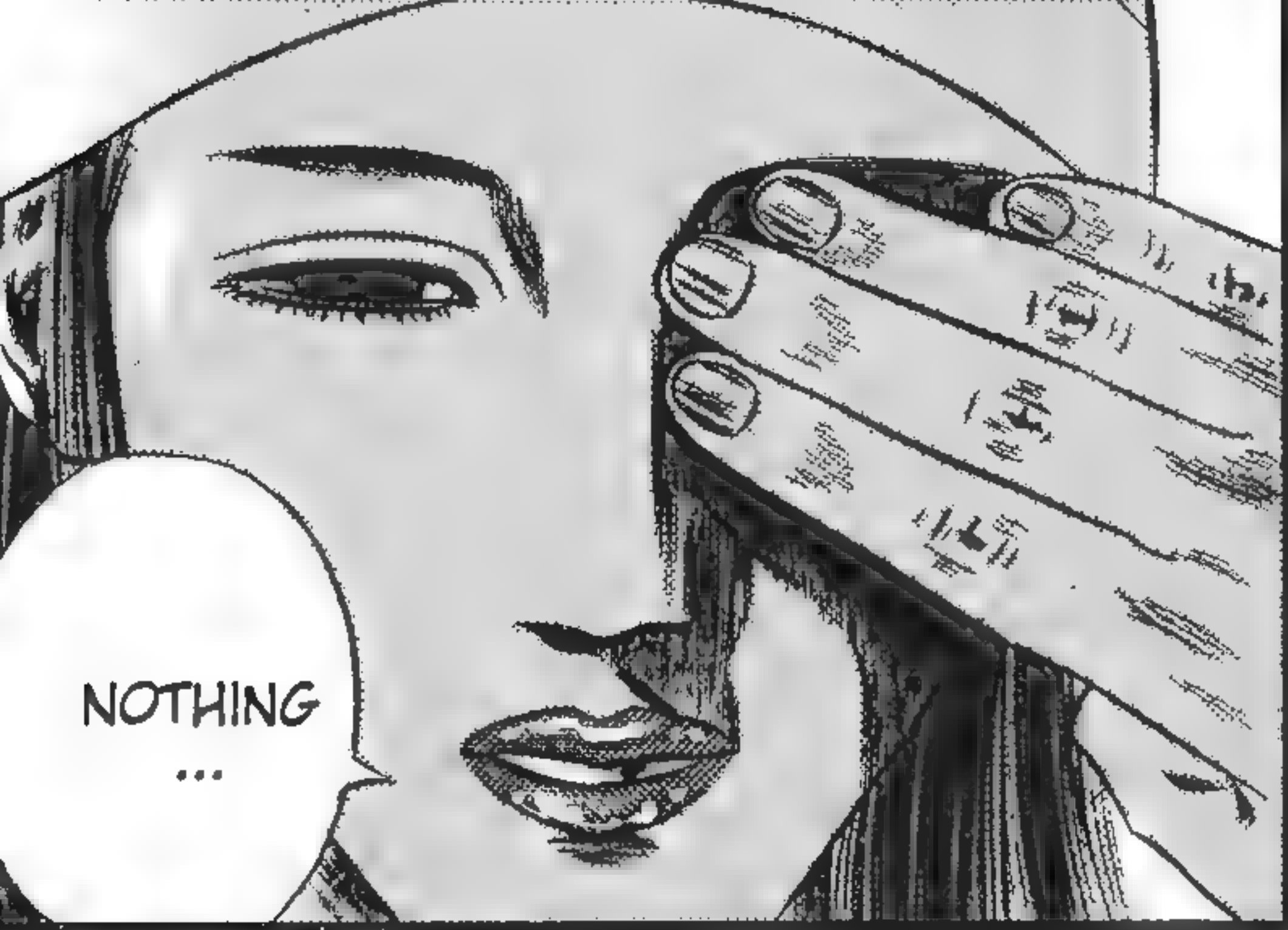


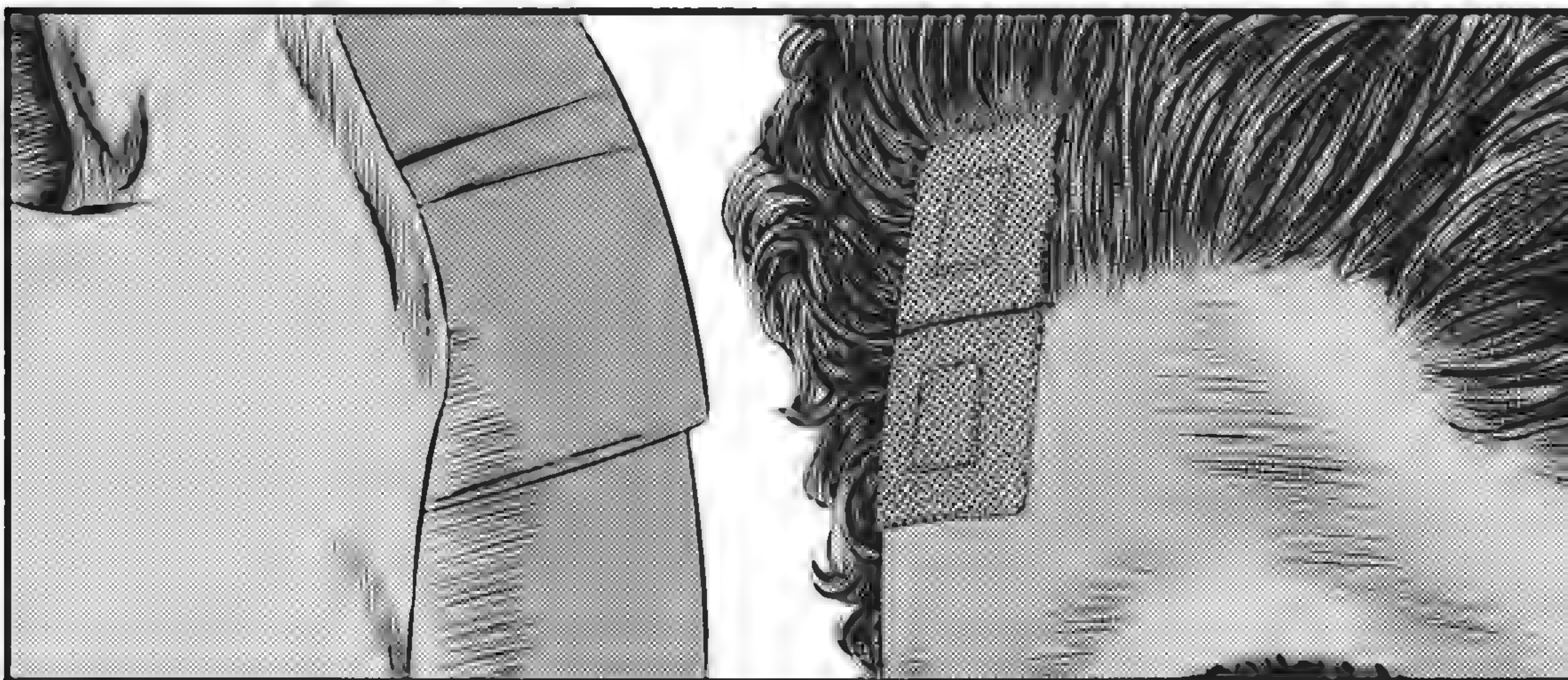
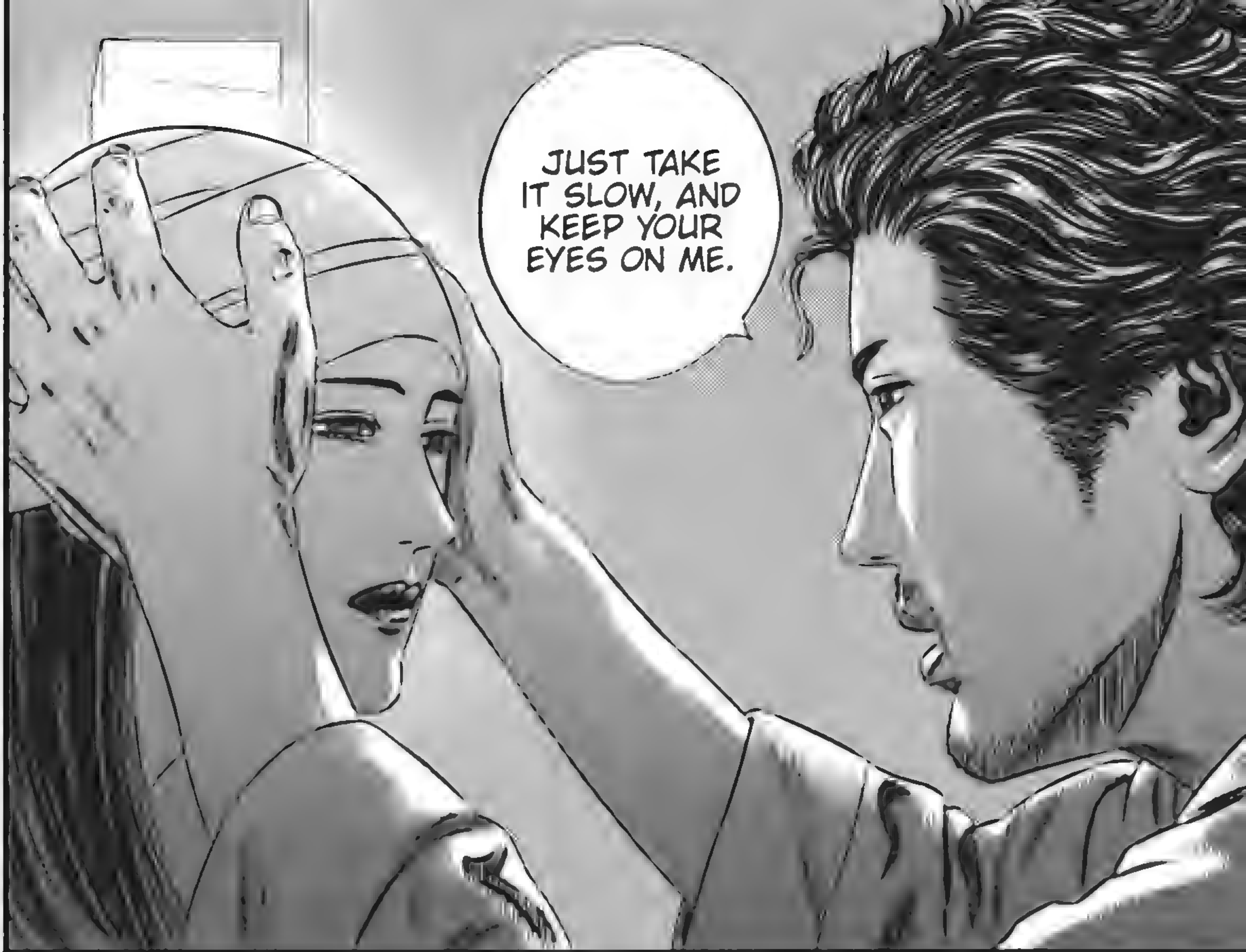






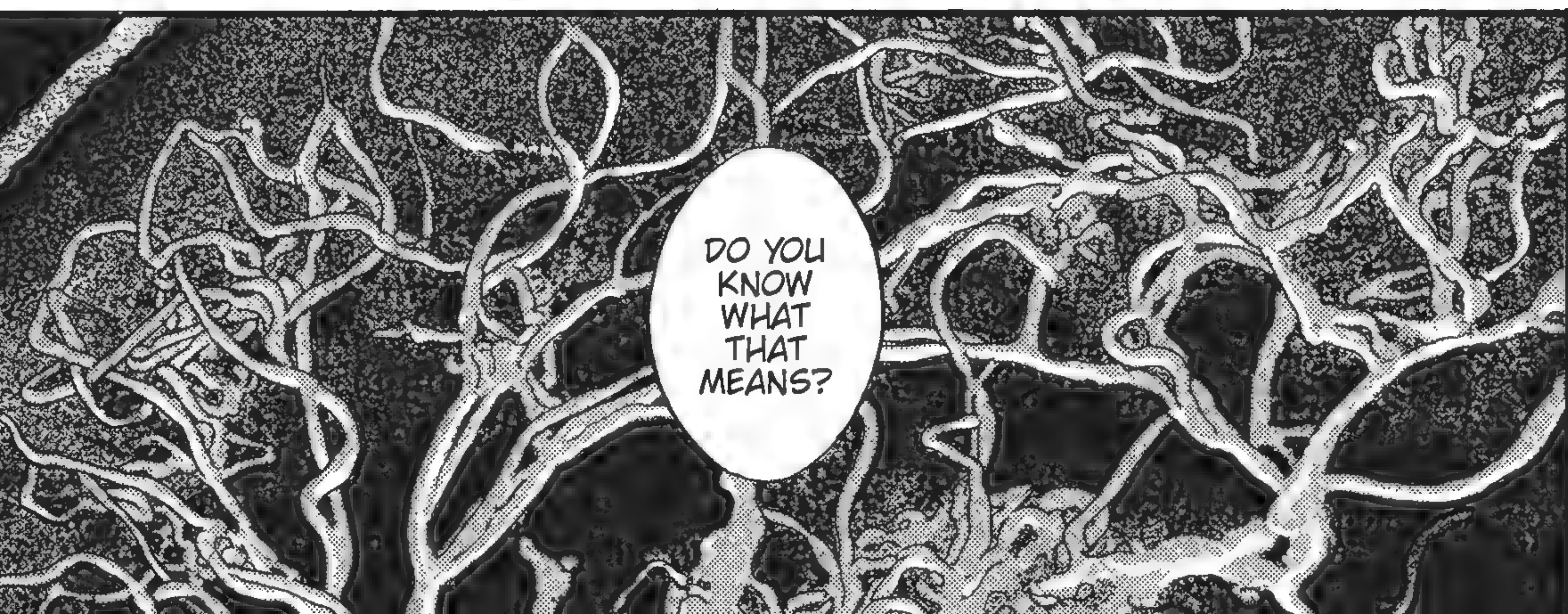
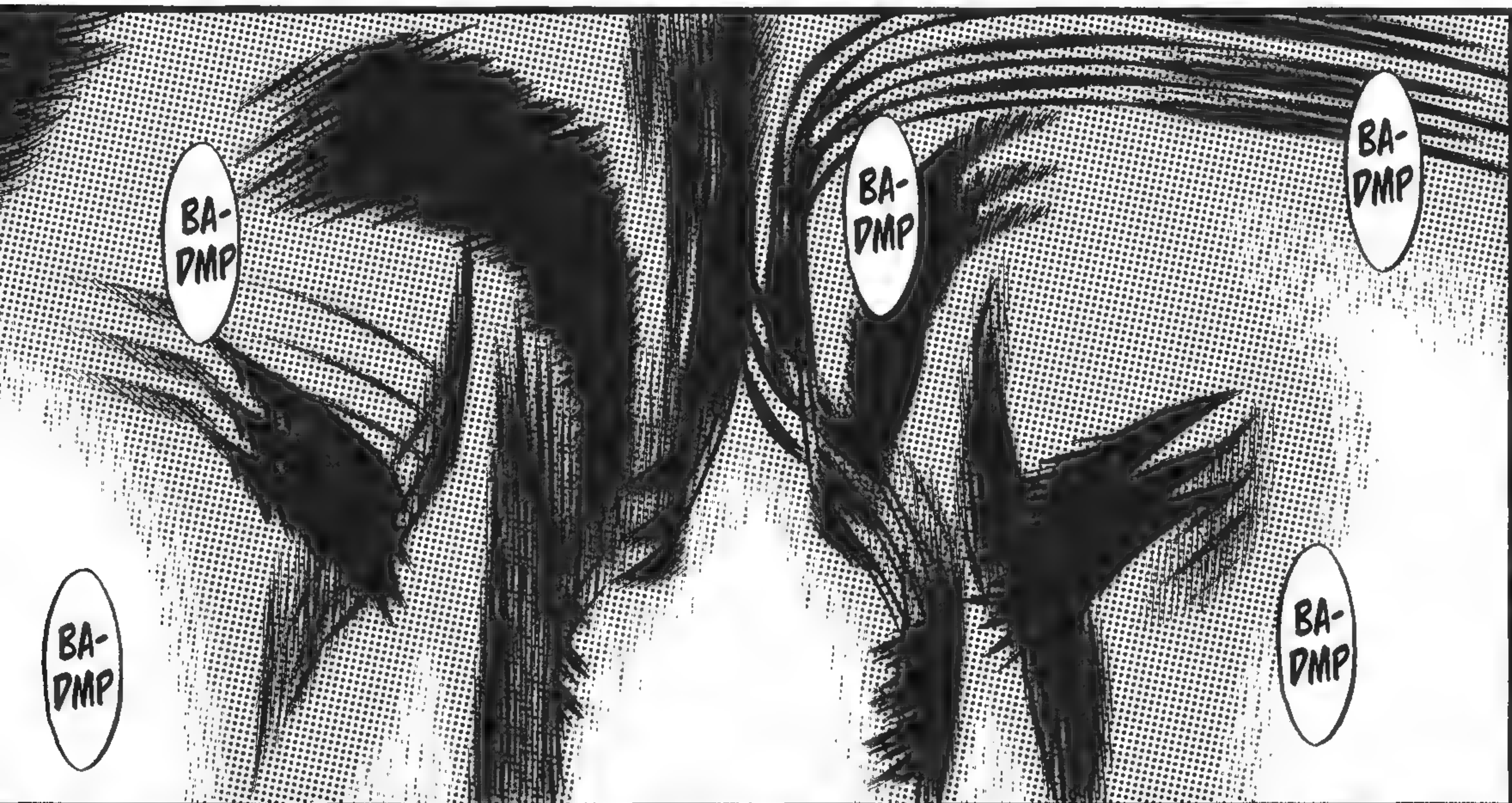






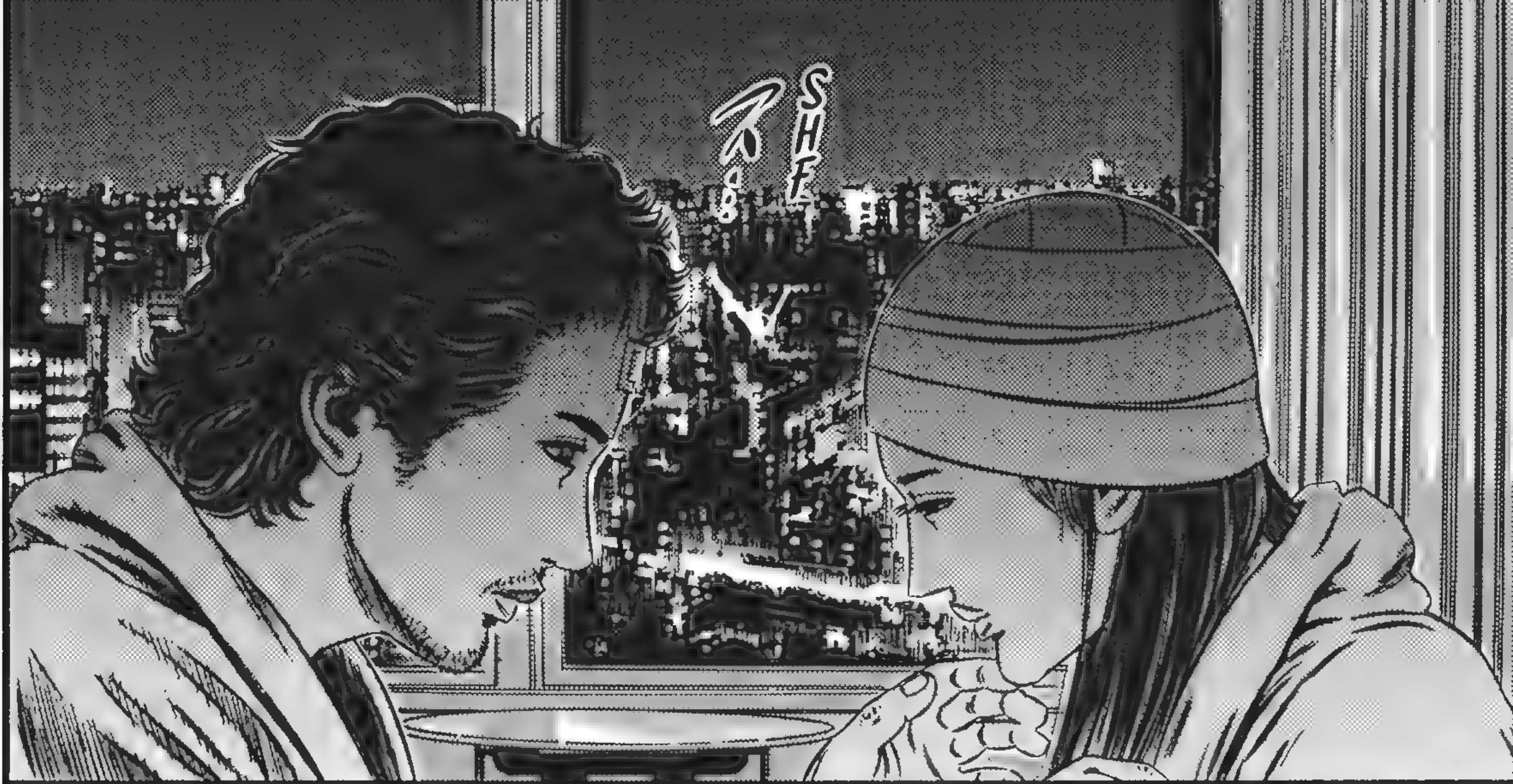






IT'S
THE
BEAT
OF
HUMAN
LIFE.





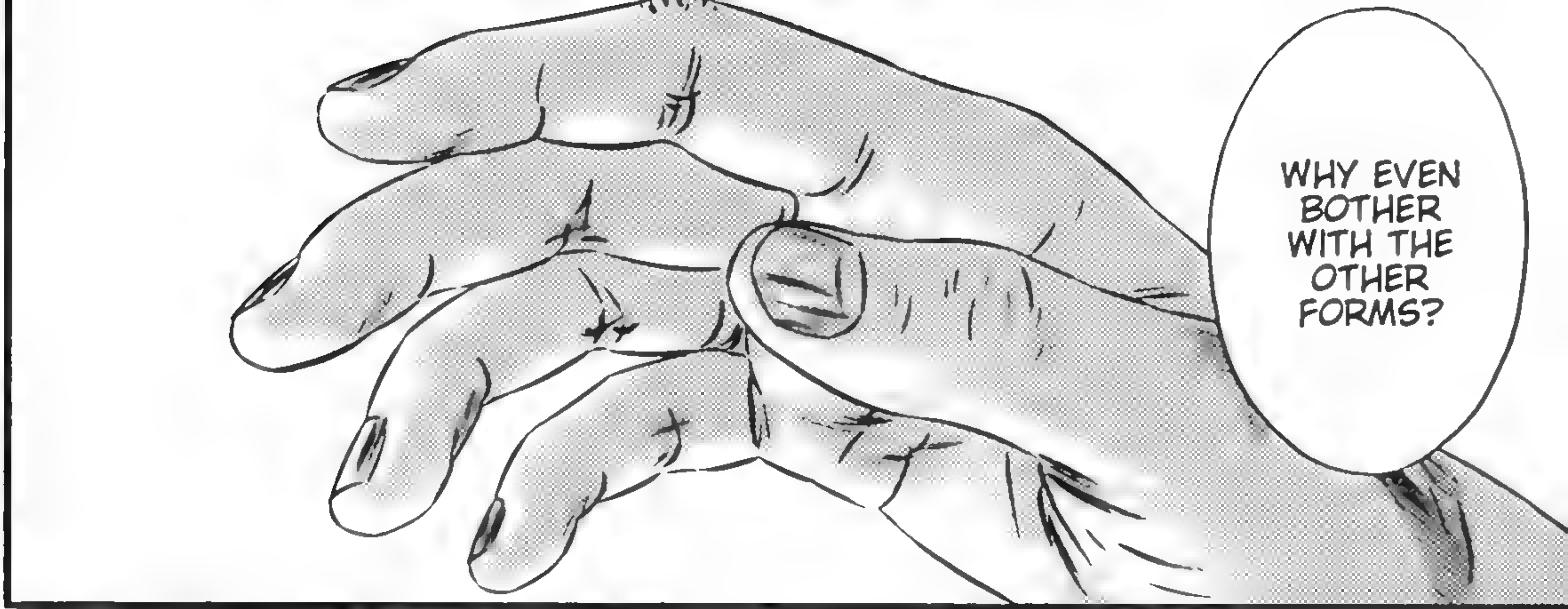




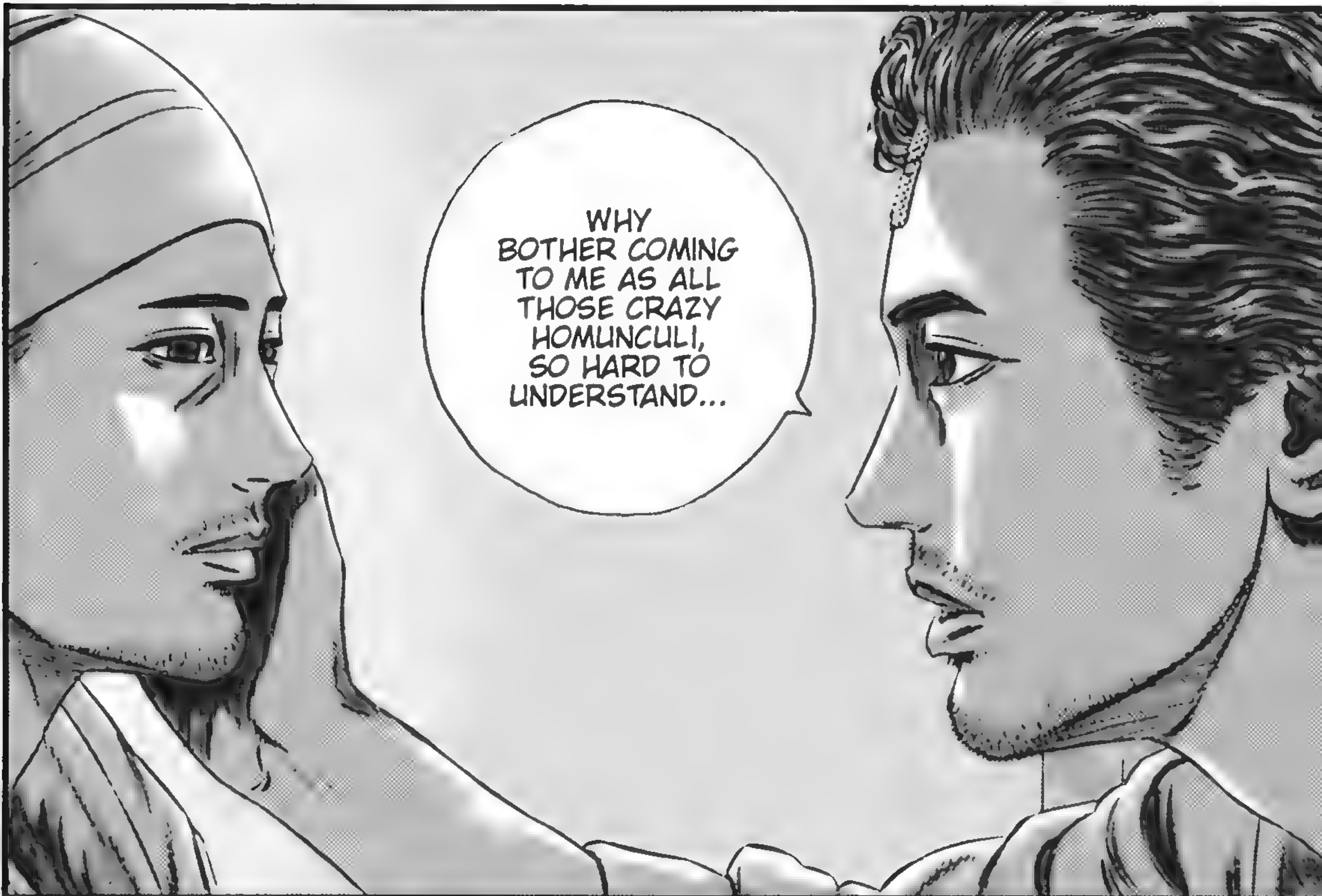


I WAS
WONDERING
WHEN YOU'D
SHOW UP!





WHY EVEN
BOTHR
WITH THE
OTHER
FORMS?



WHY
BOTHR COMING
TO ME AS ALL
THOSE CRAZY
HOMUNCULI,
SO HARD TO
UNDERSTAND...

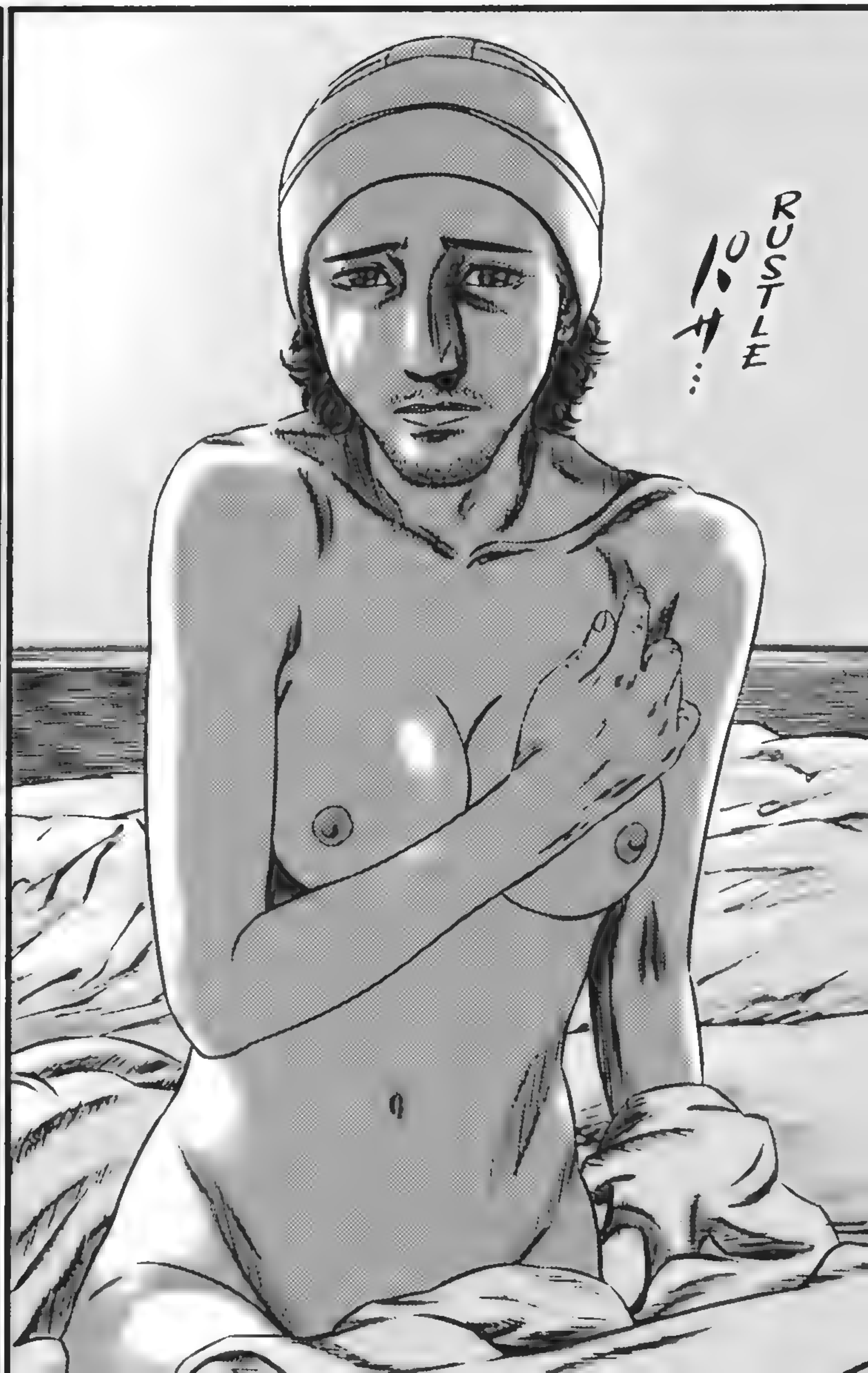
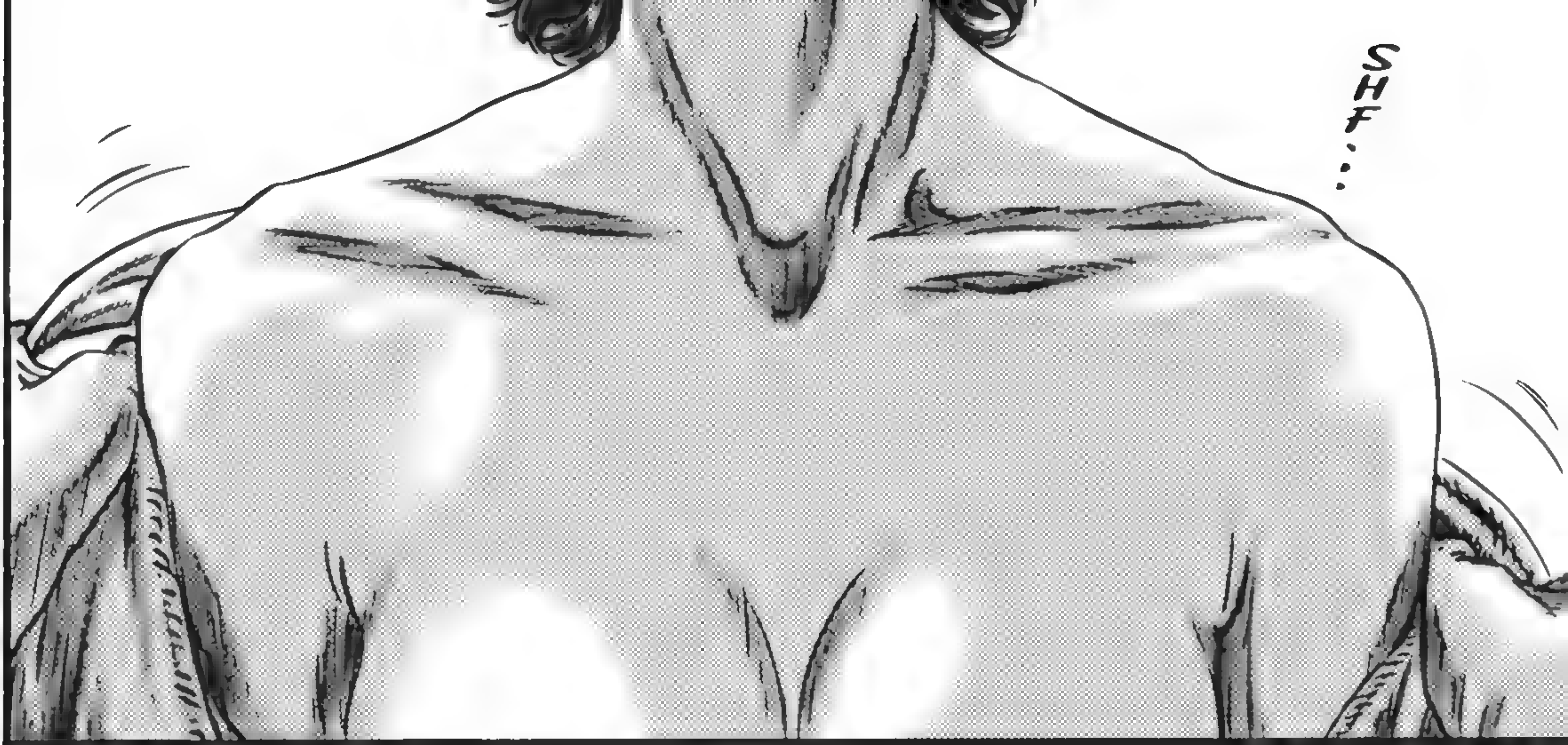


THIS IS
WHAT YOU
REALLY
WANTED
TO SHOW
ME?



WHEN,
FROM THE
START...

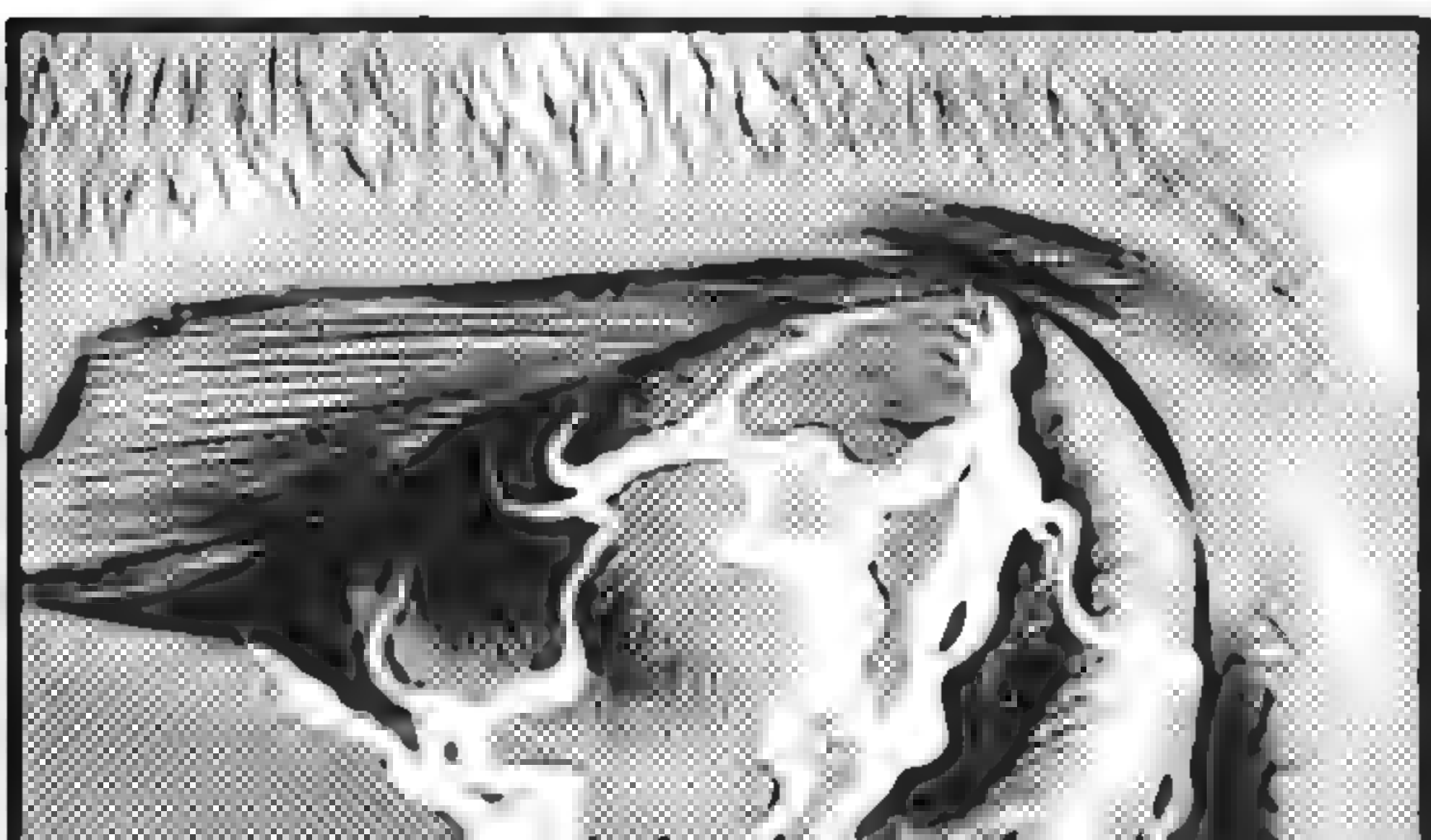


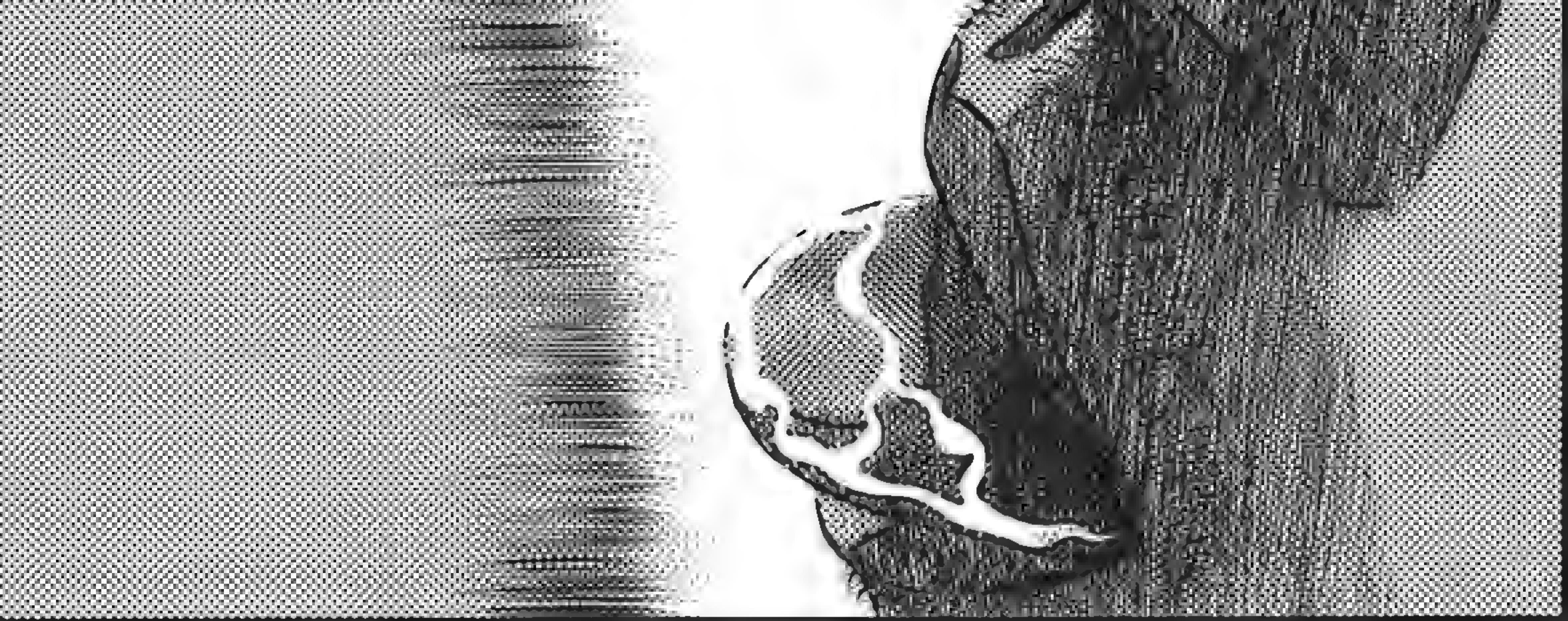


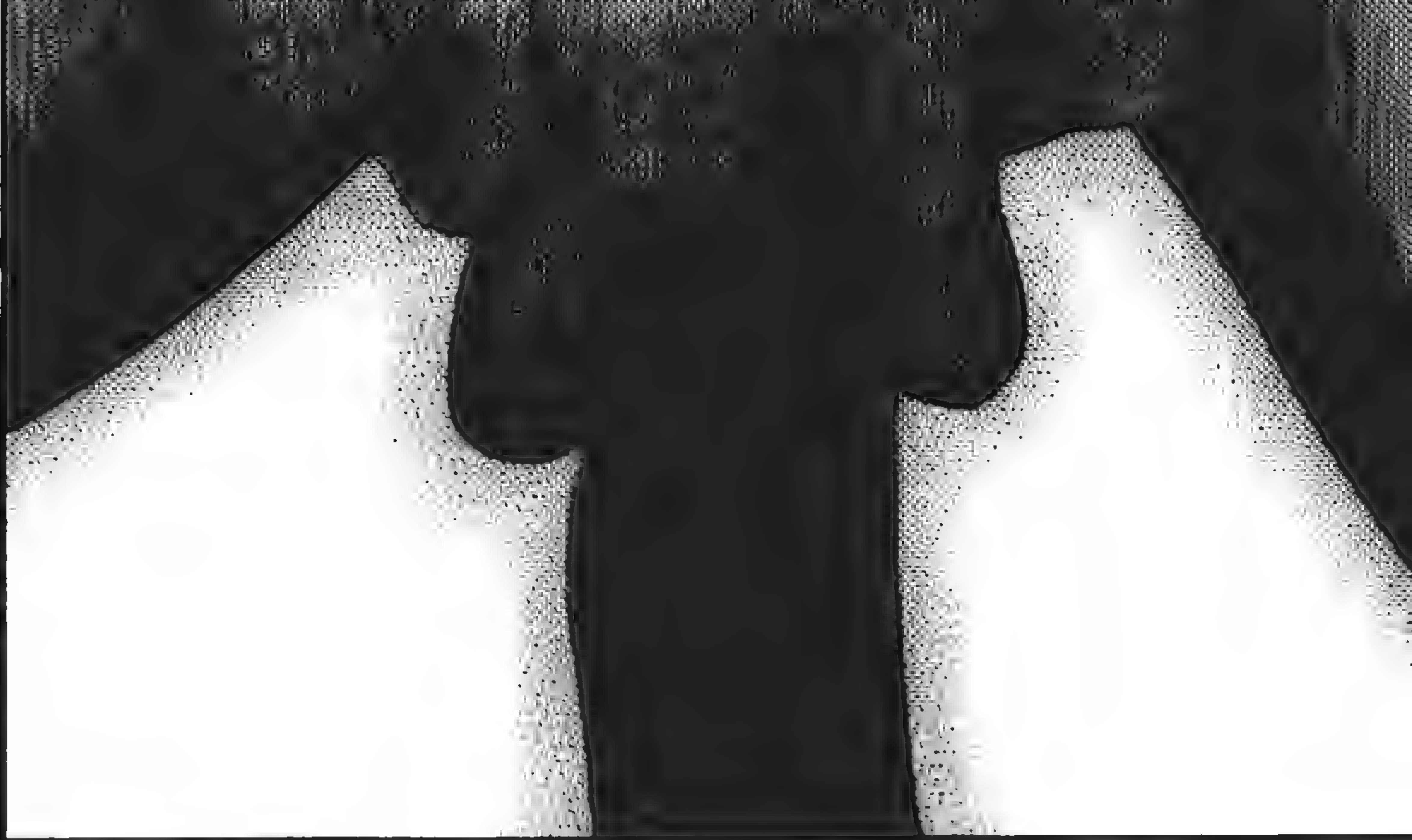














YEAH...



ARE YOU
READY?

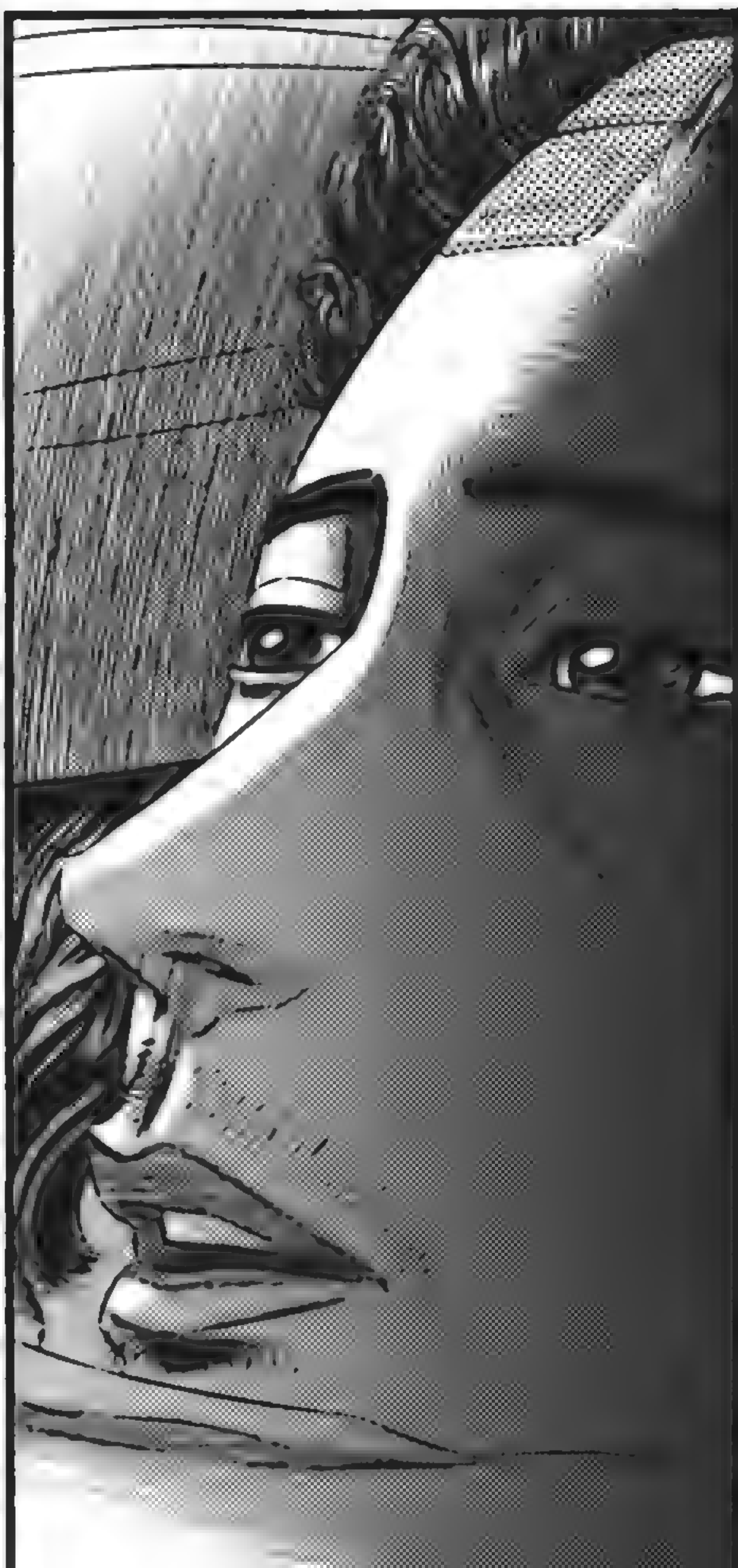
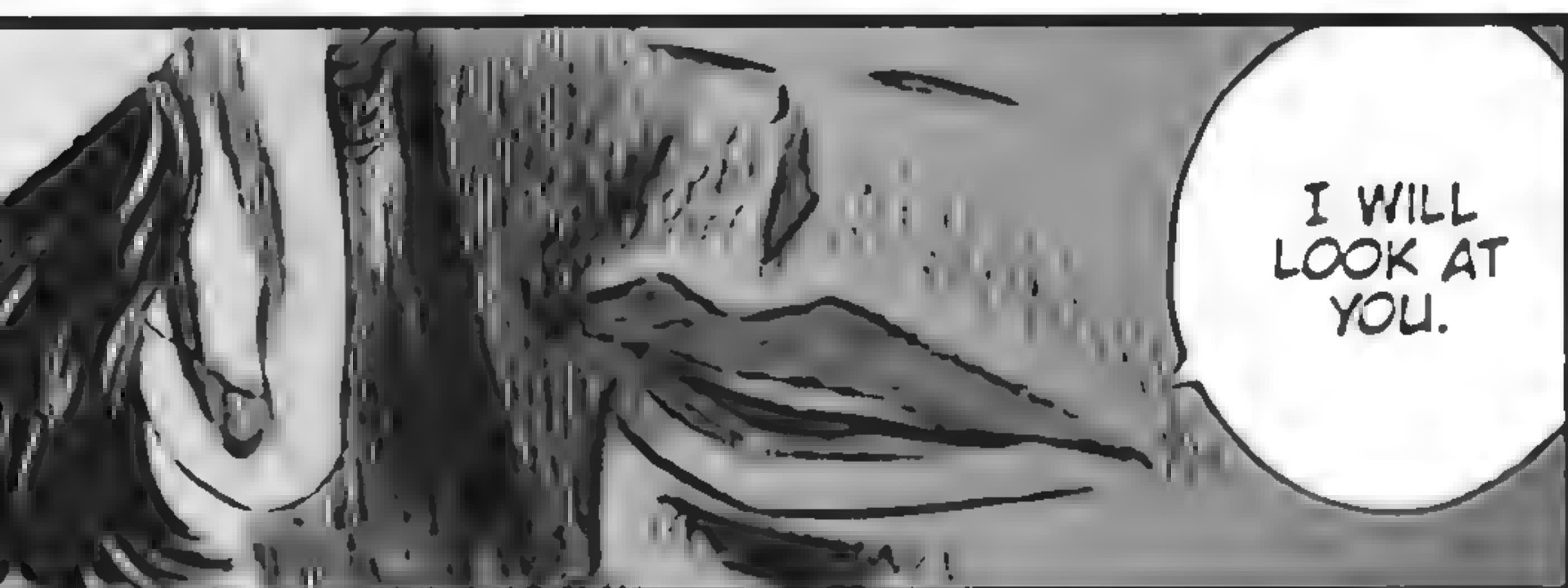


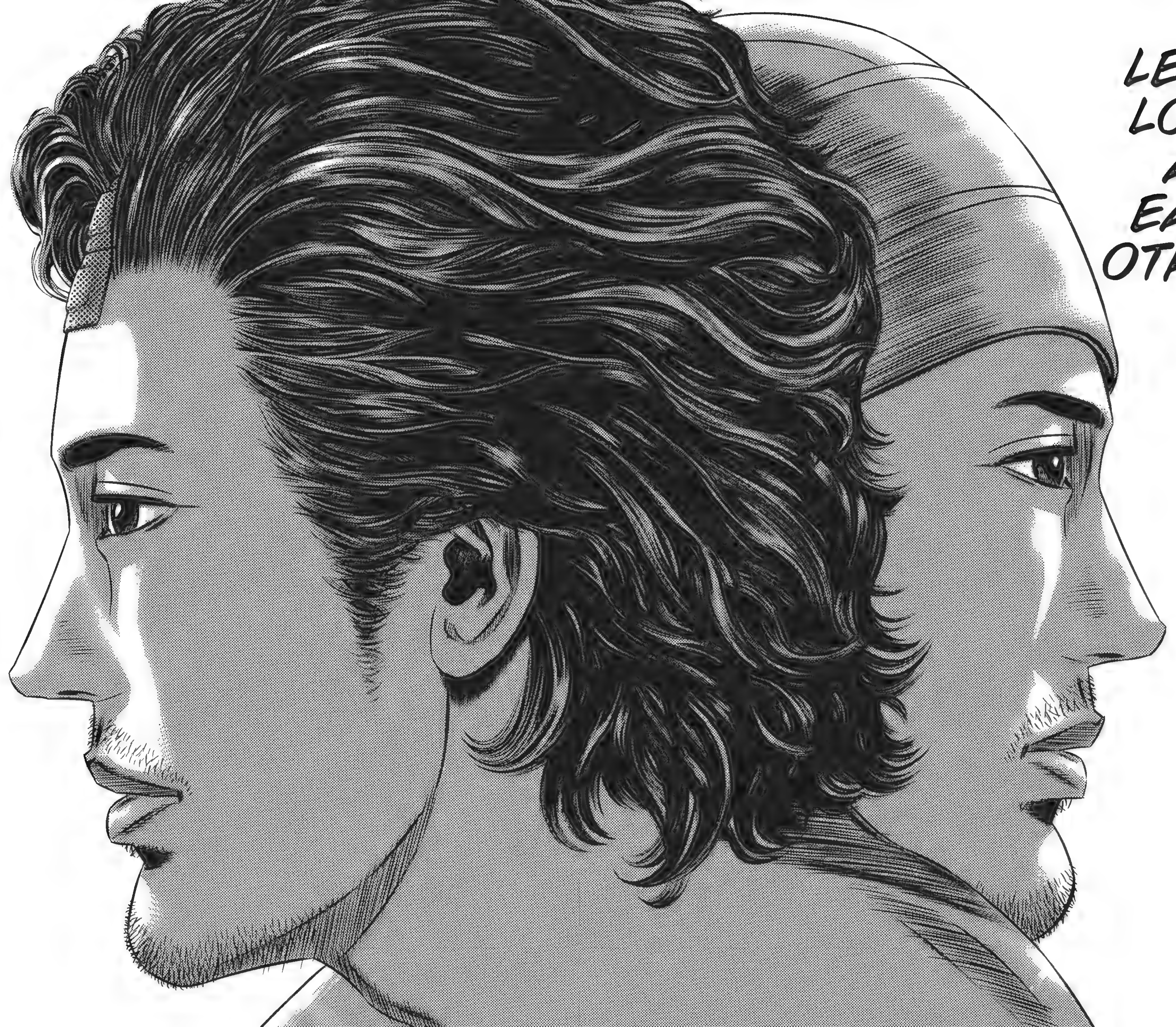
LET'S
BECOME
ONE.

T
M
P



THRUST

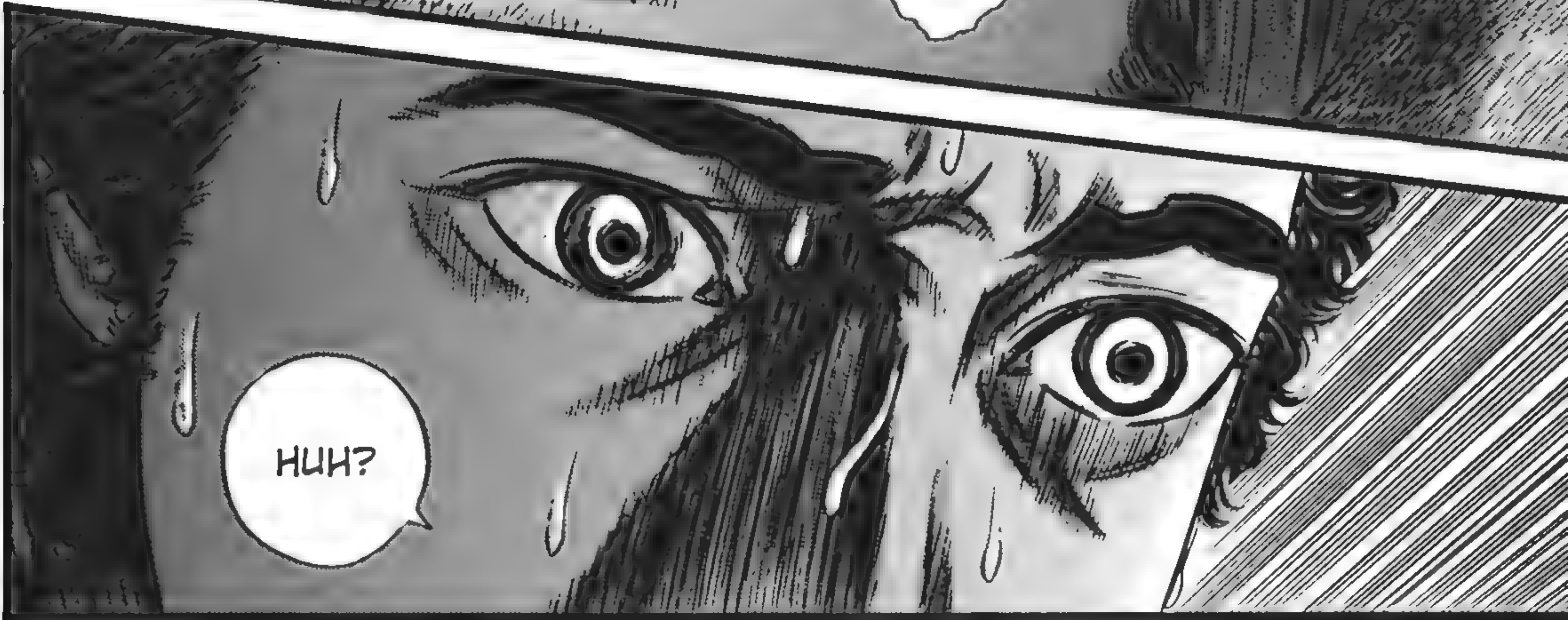


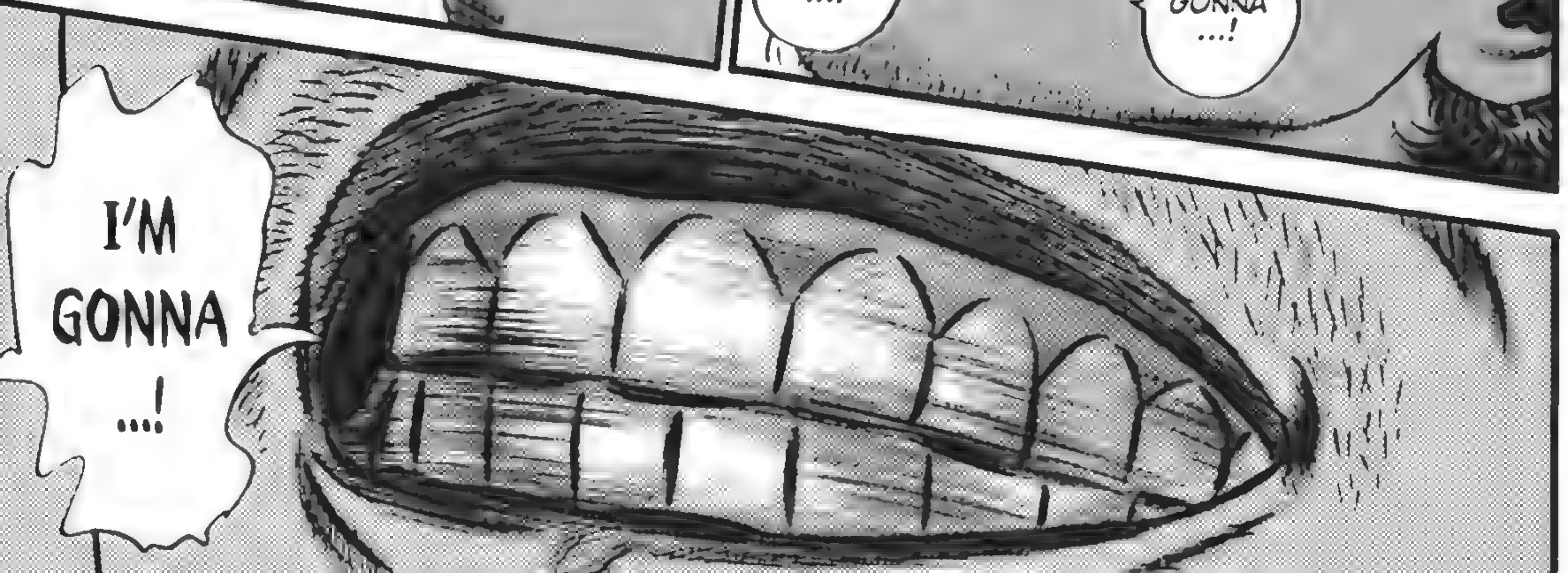
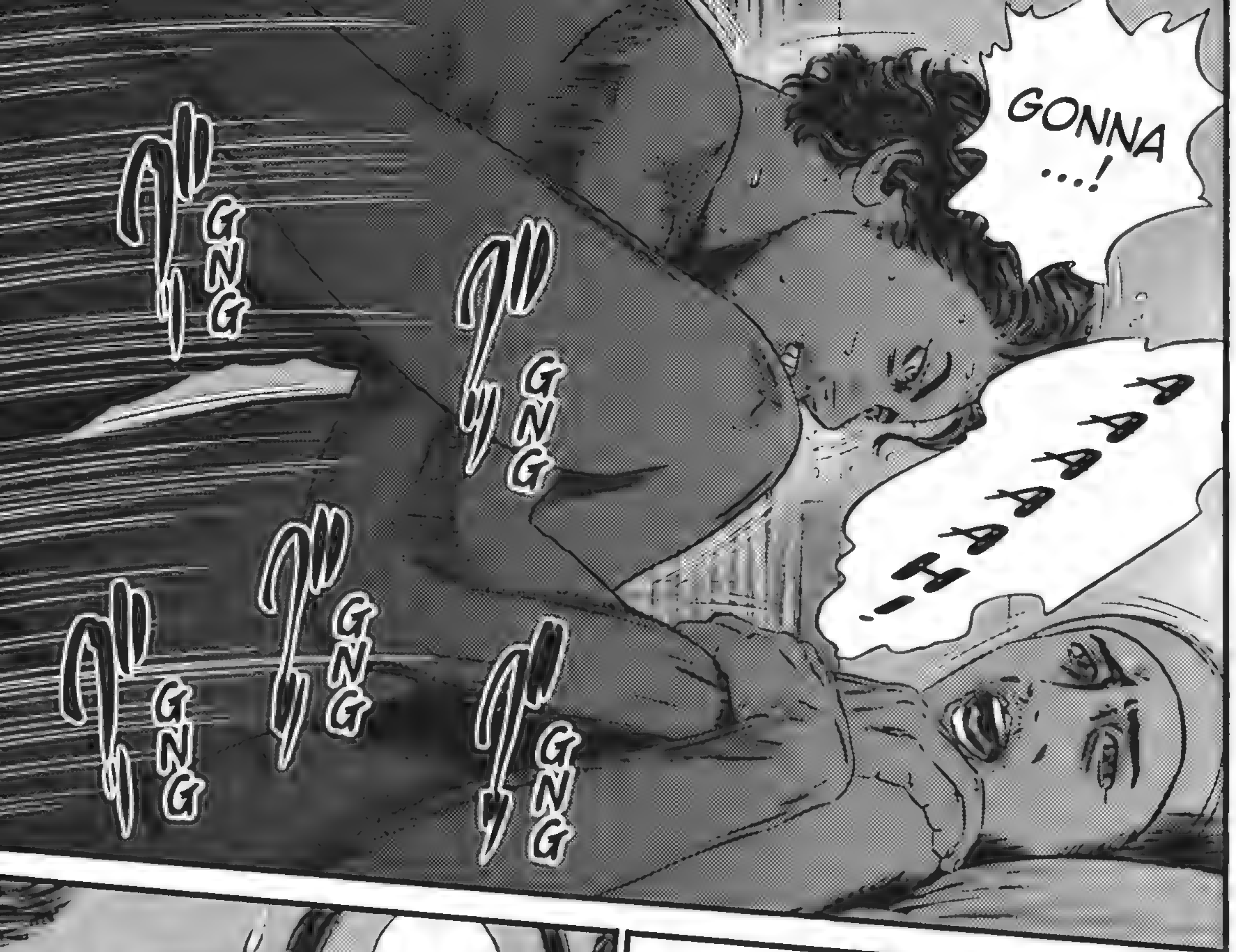


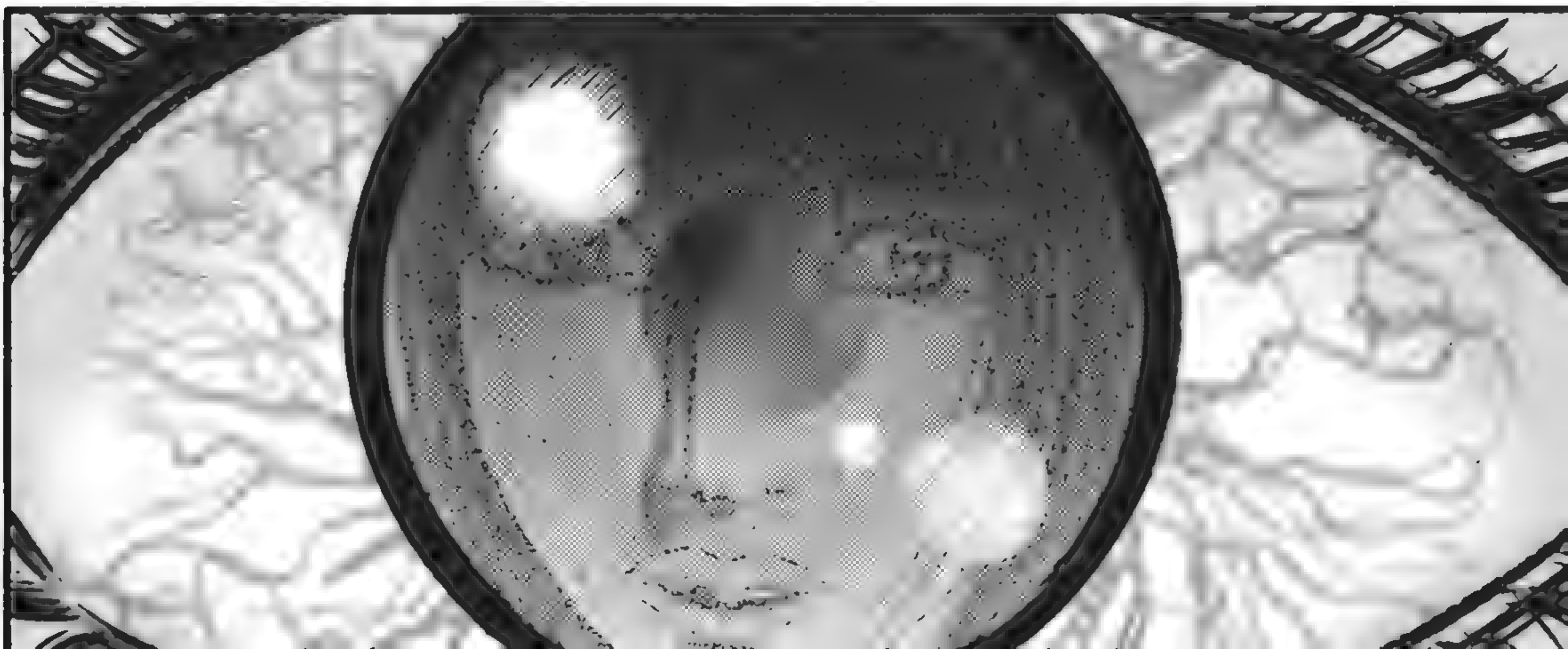
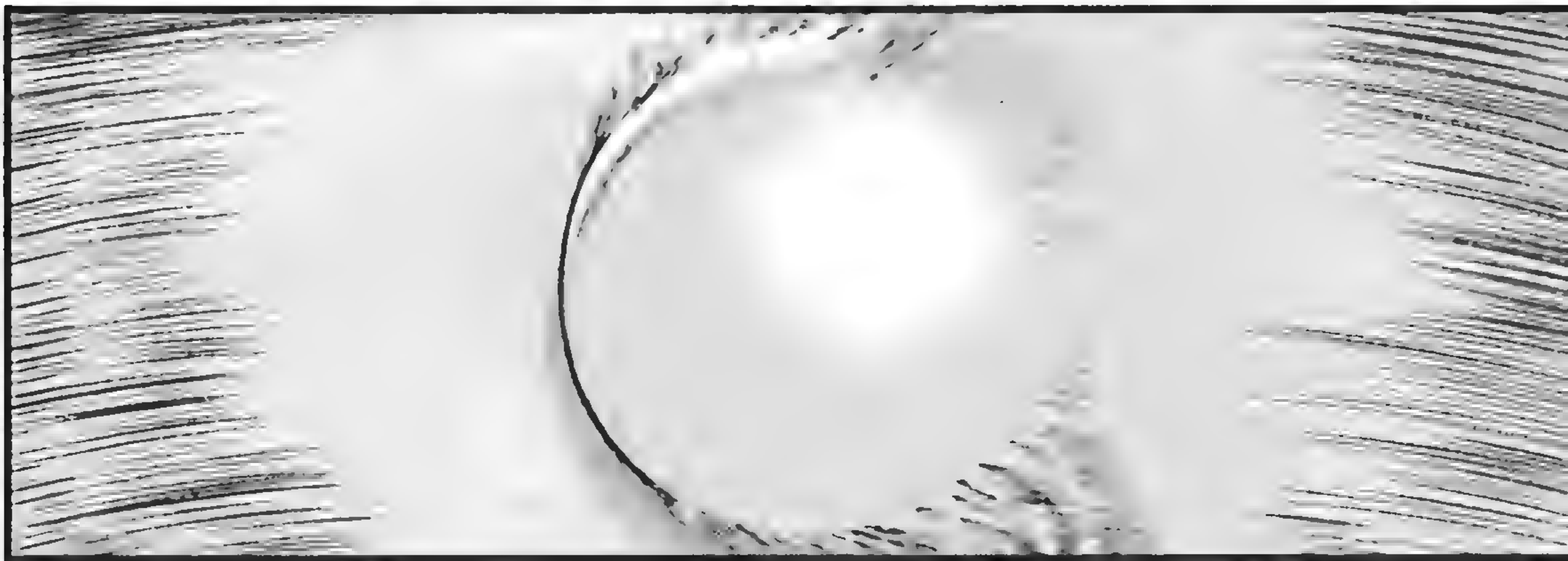
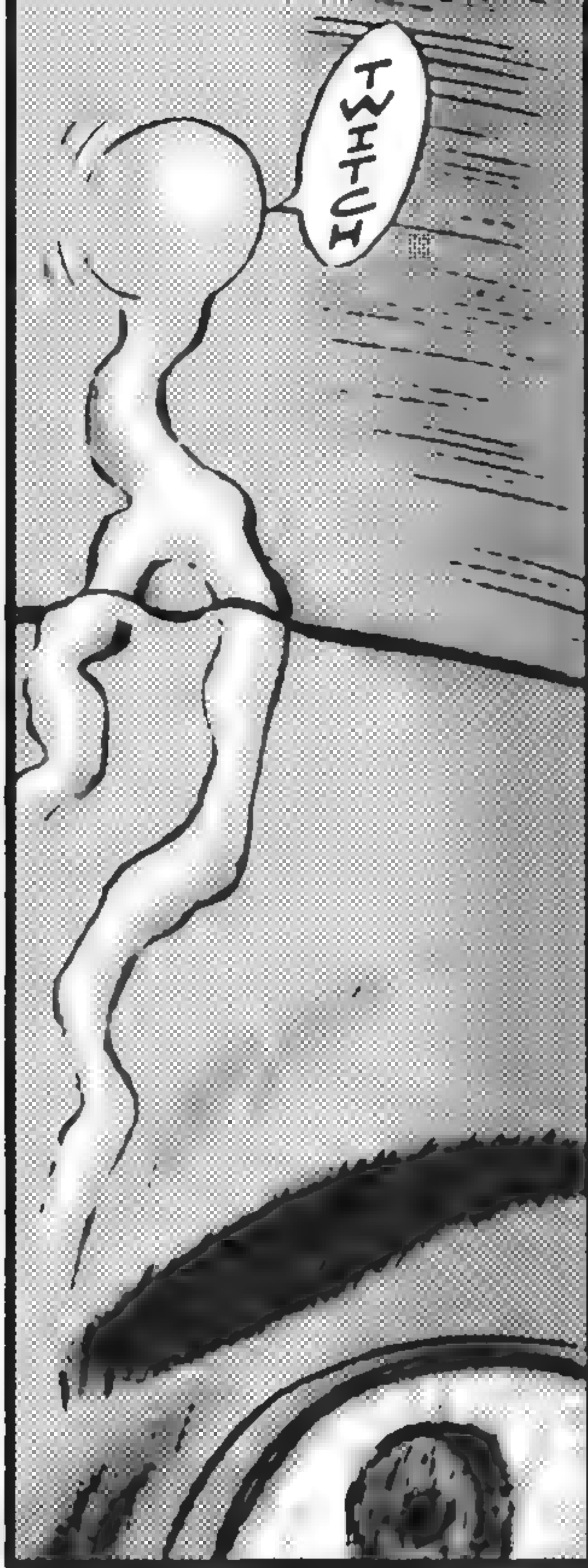
LET'S
LOOK
AT
EACH
OTHER!







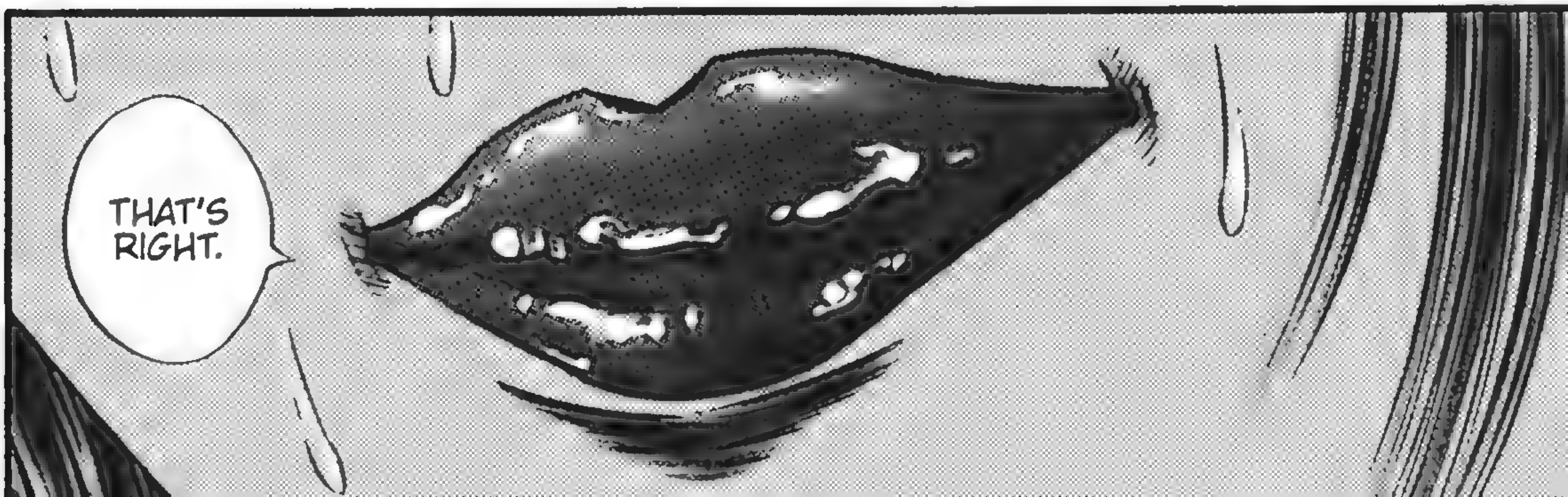








IT'S
ME!



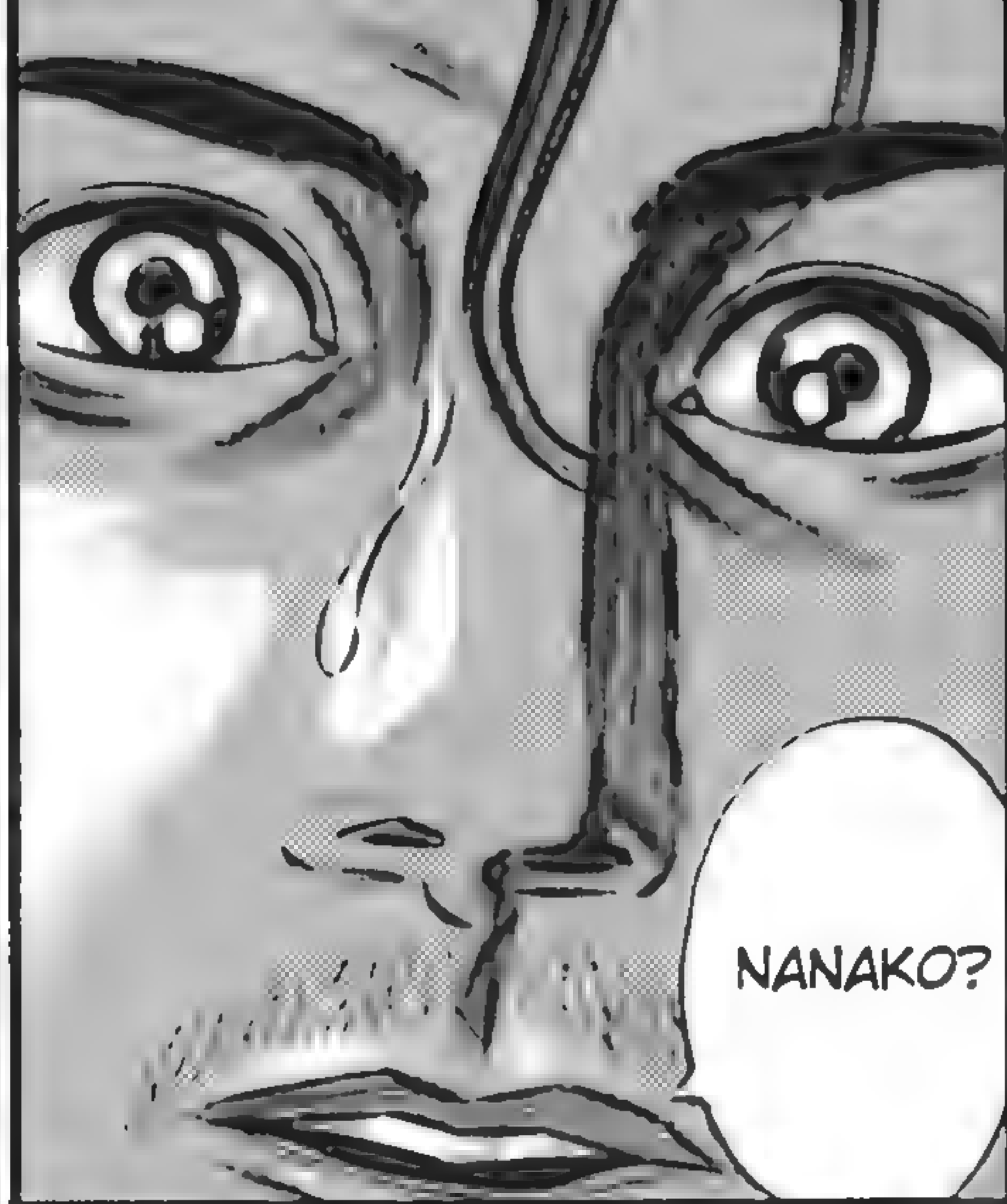


I'M
YOU.





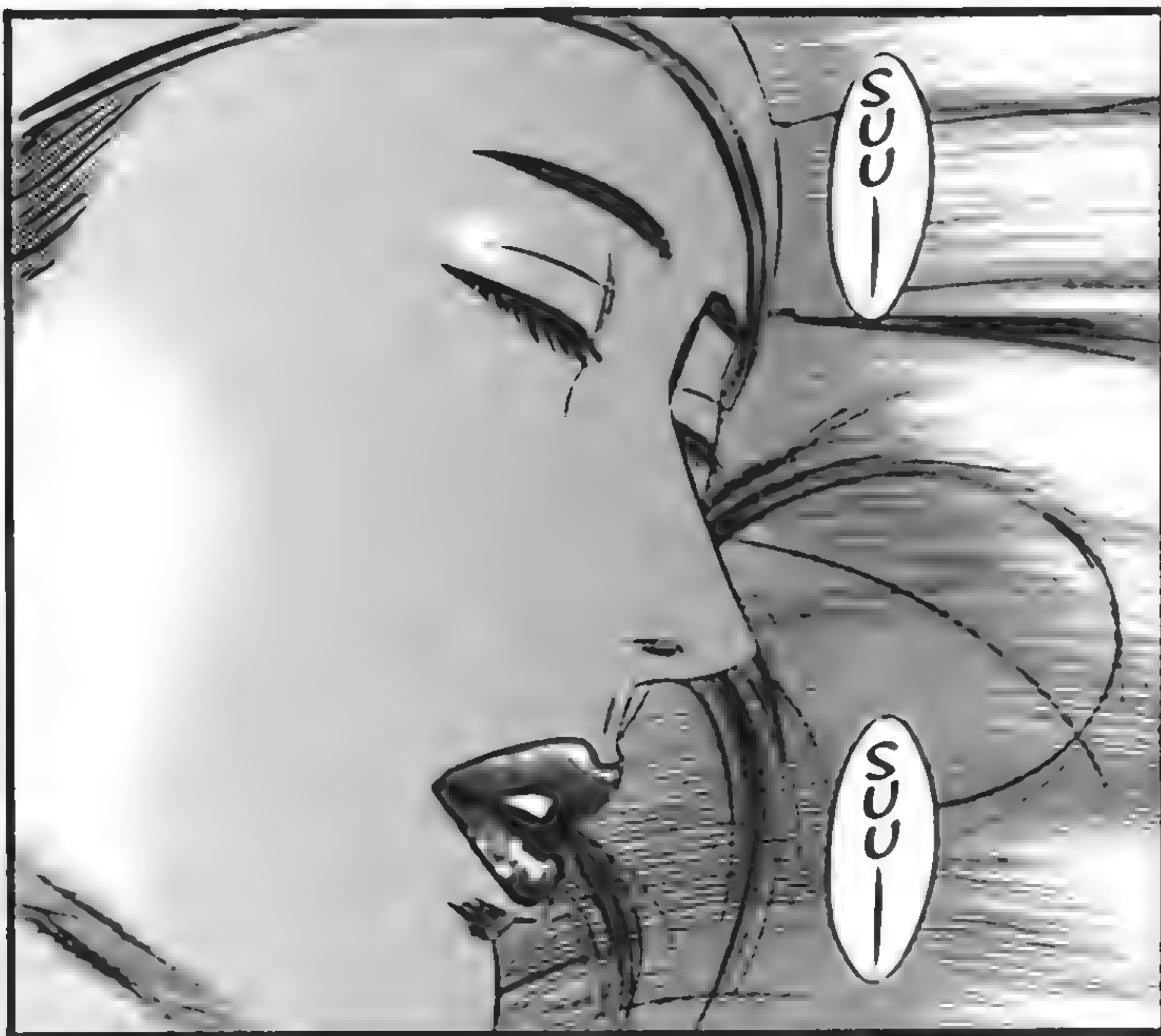
NANAKO?!
WAKE UP!



NANAKO?



PHEW...



SUC—

SUC—



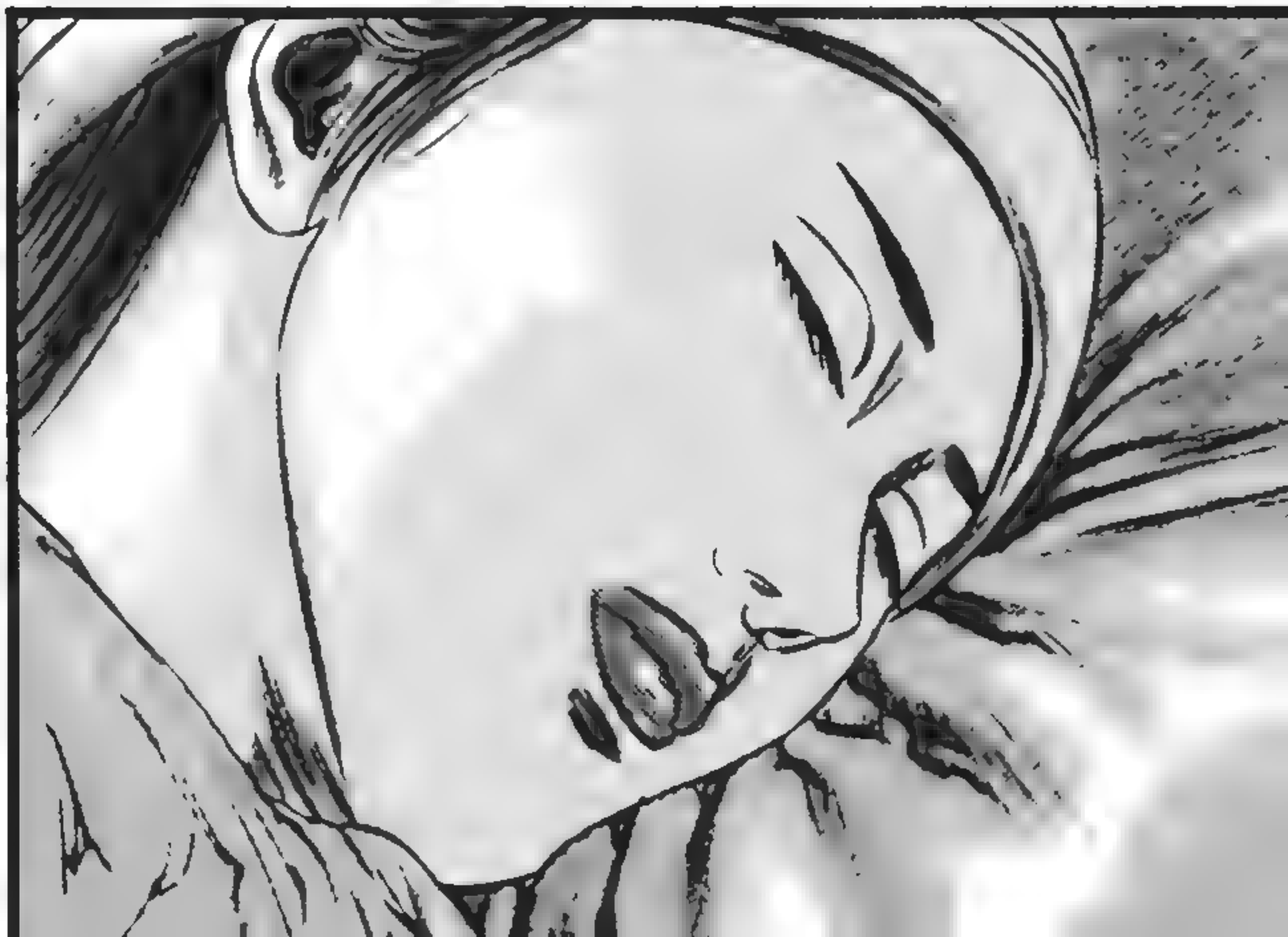
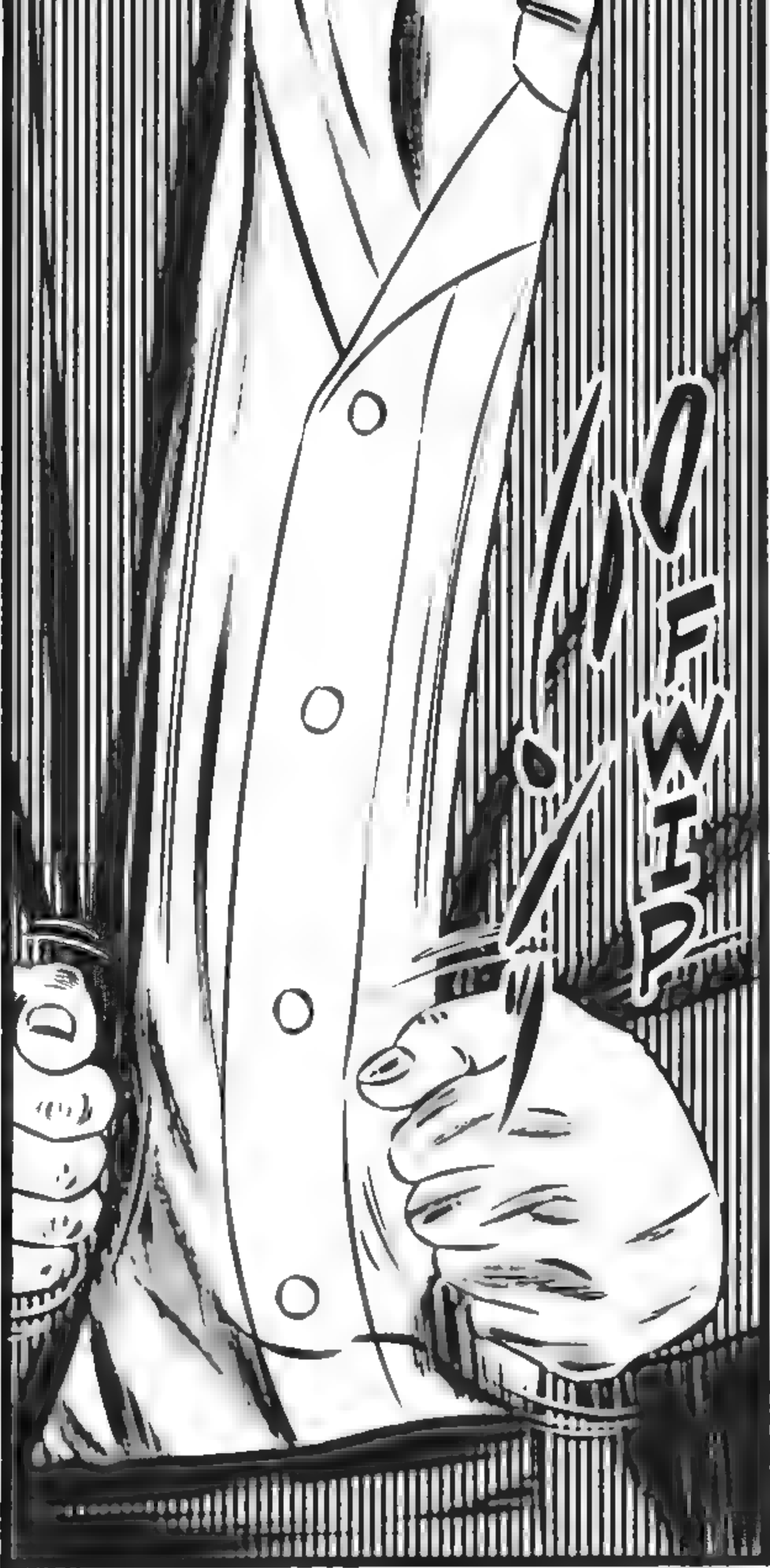
I'LL
LET YOU
SLEEP
FOR
NOW.

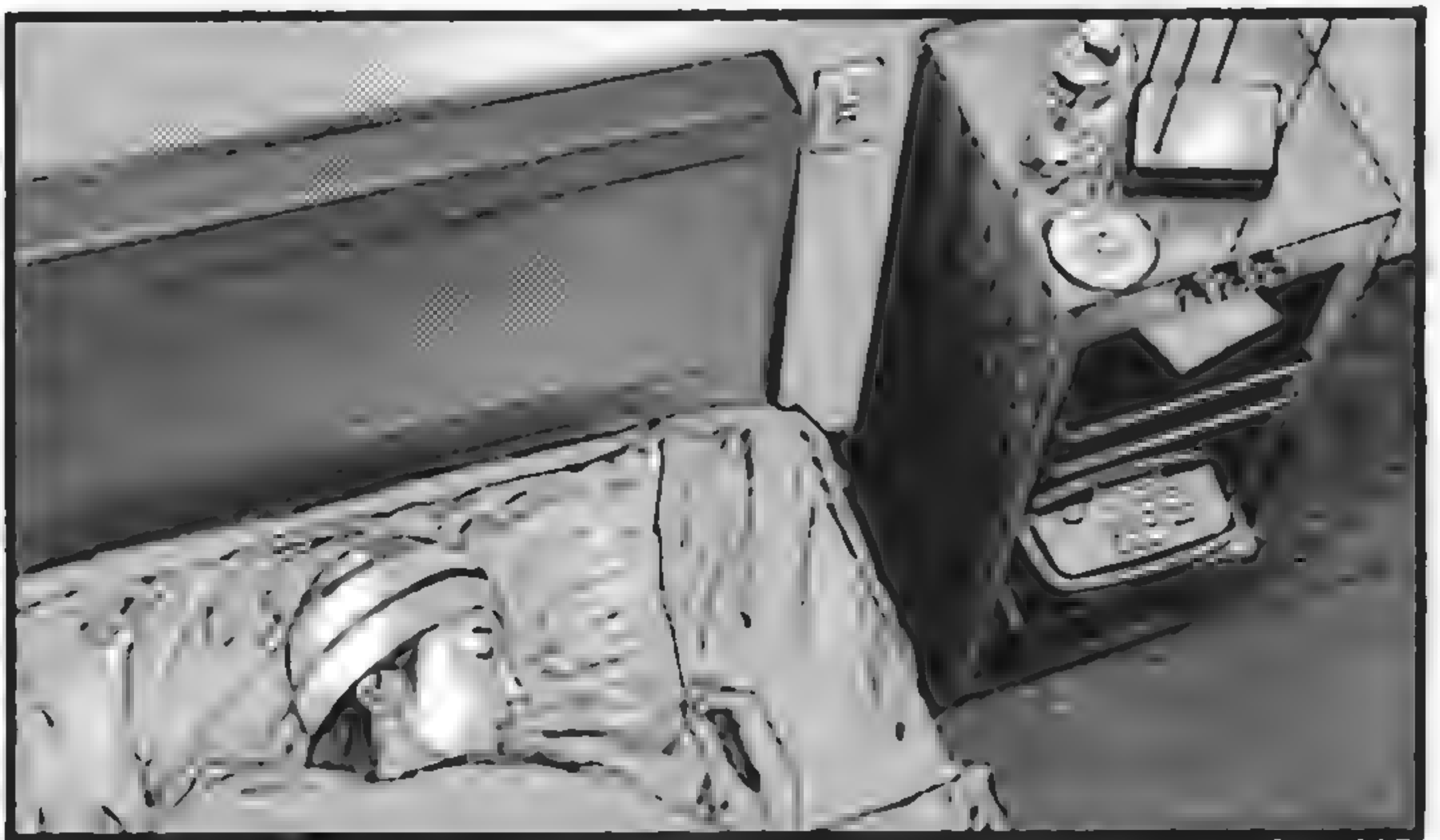
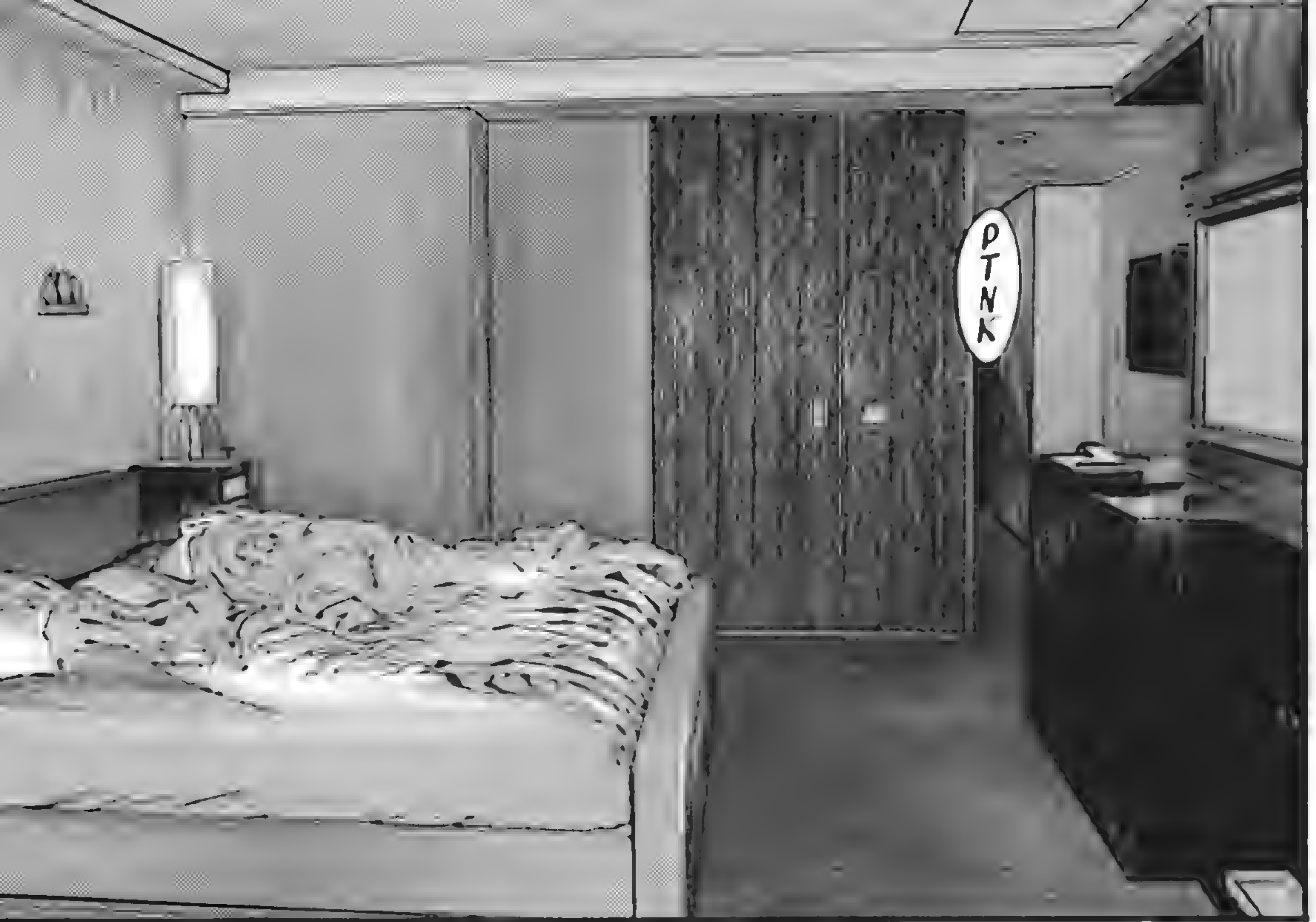


POOR THING.
YOU MUST'VE
LOST A LOT
OF BLOOD.

SUC—

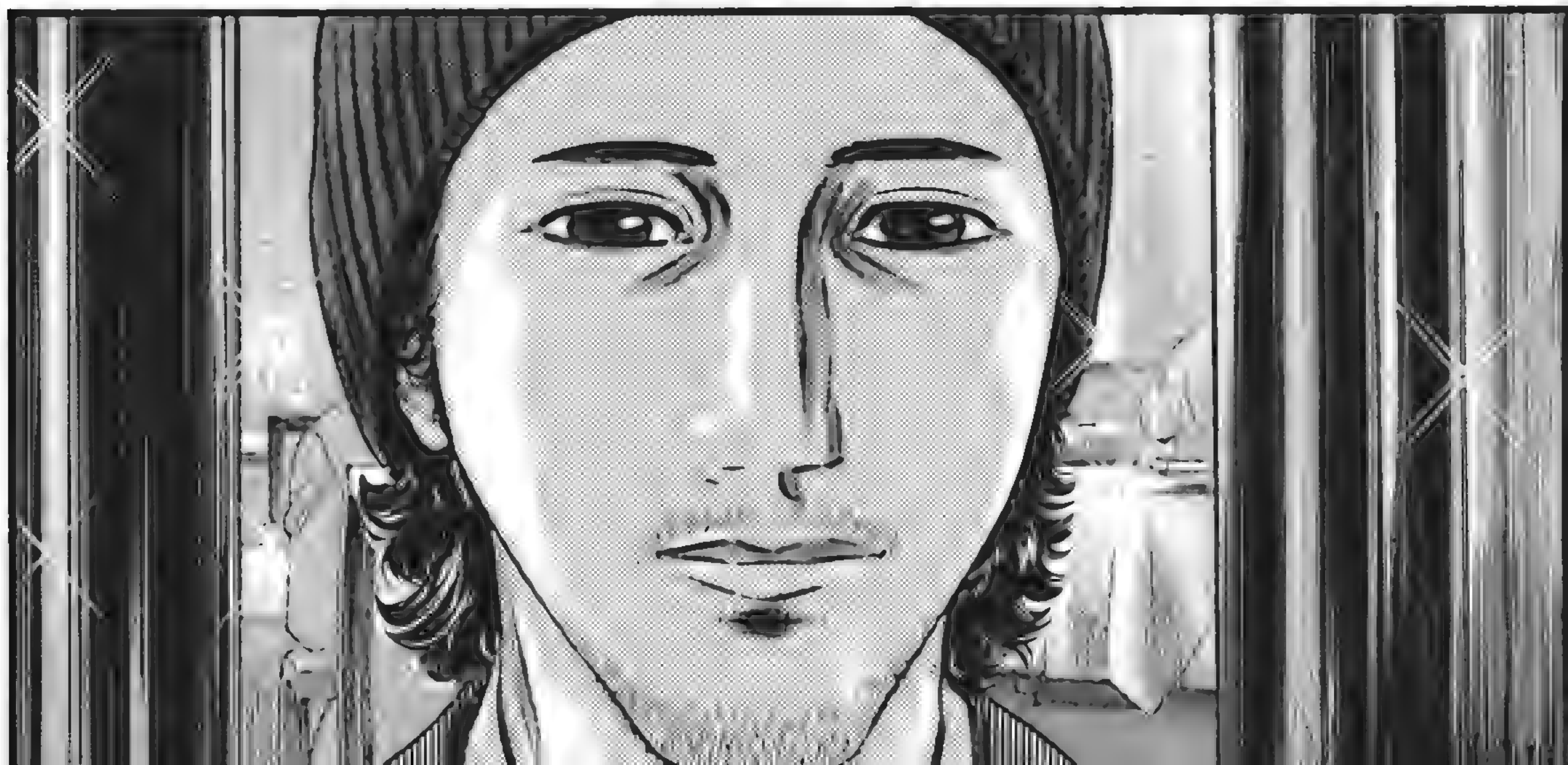
SUC—













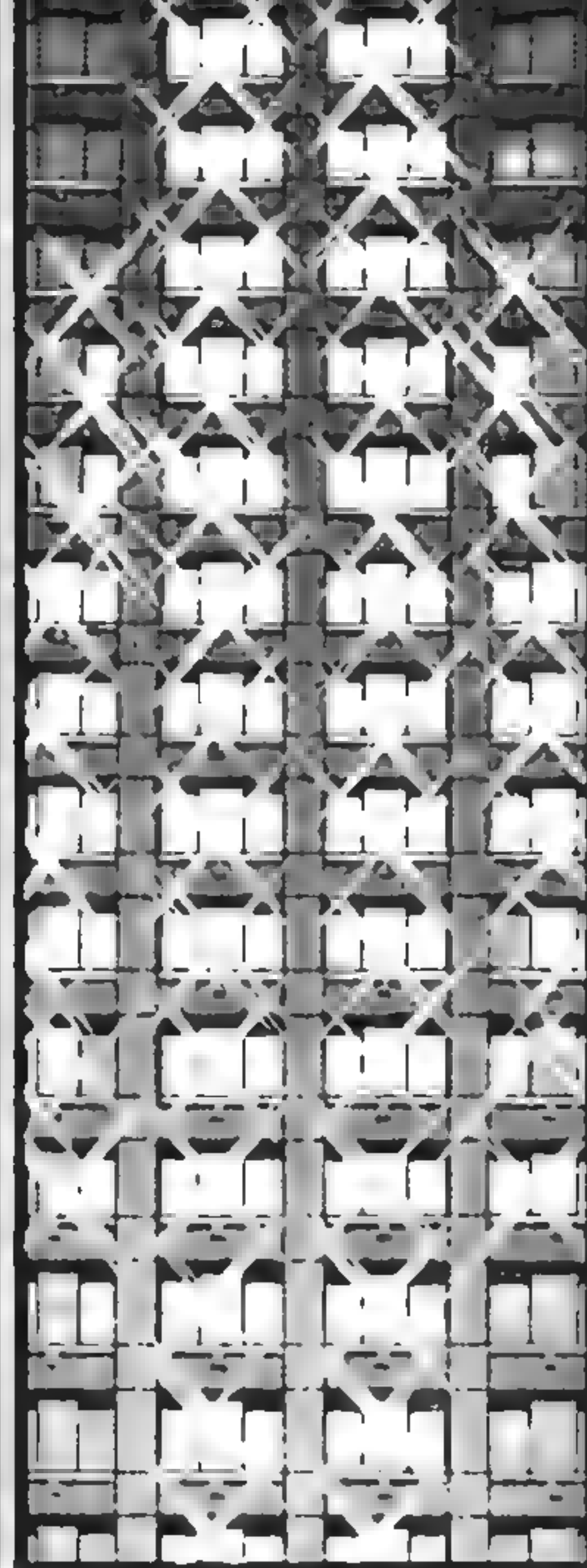










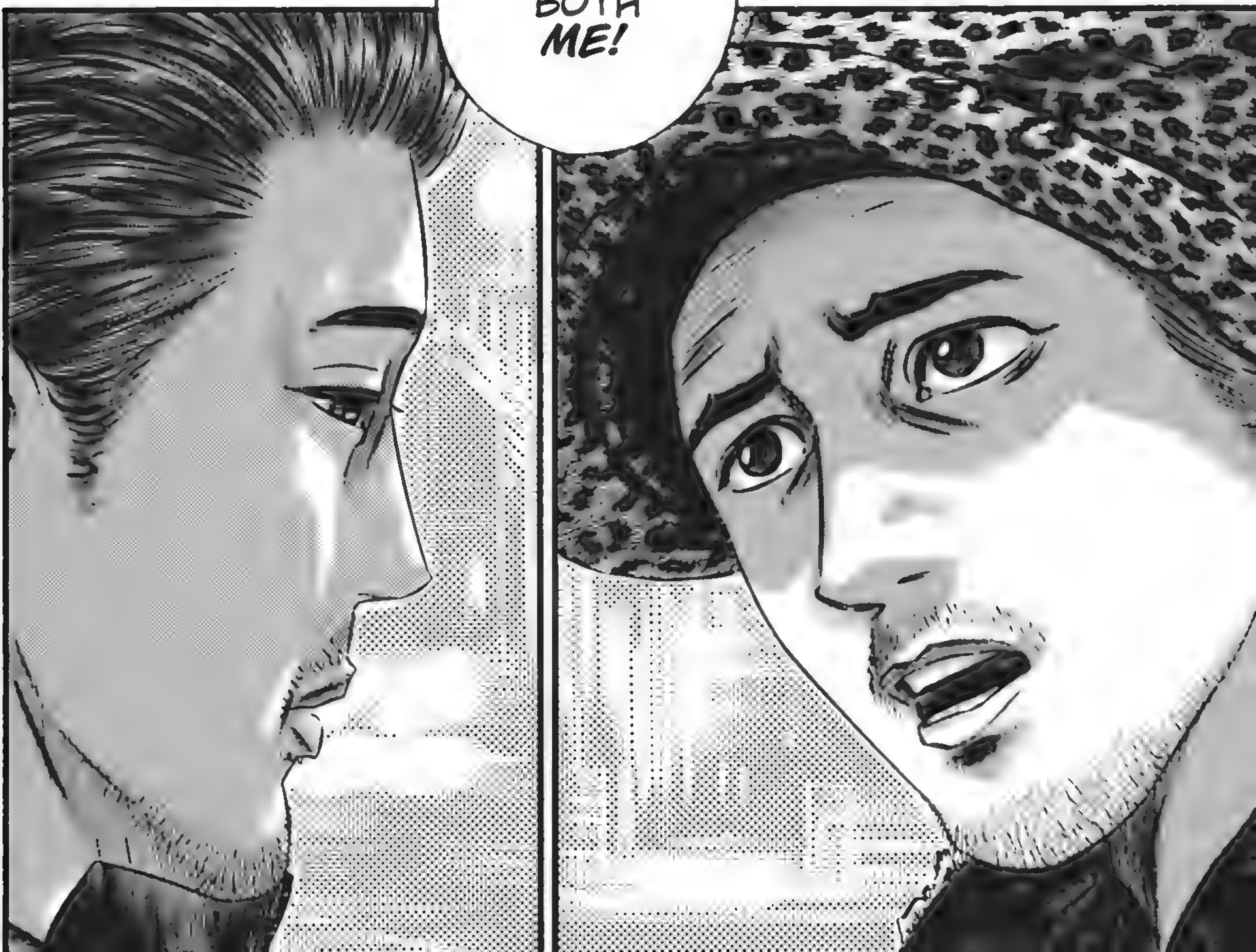








THEY'RE
BOTH
ME!









SLOUCHING
THROUGH EMPTY
DAYS--SEEING
NOTHING, SAYING
NOTHING--
THAT'S THE
STUPIDEST WAY
TO LIVE.

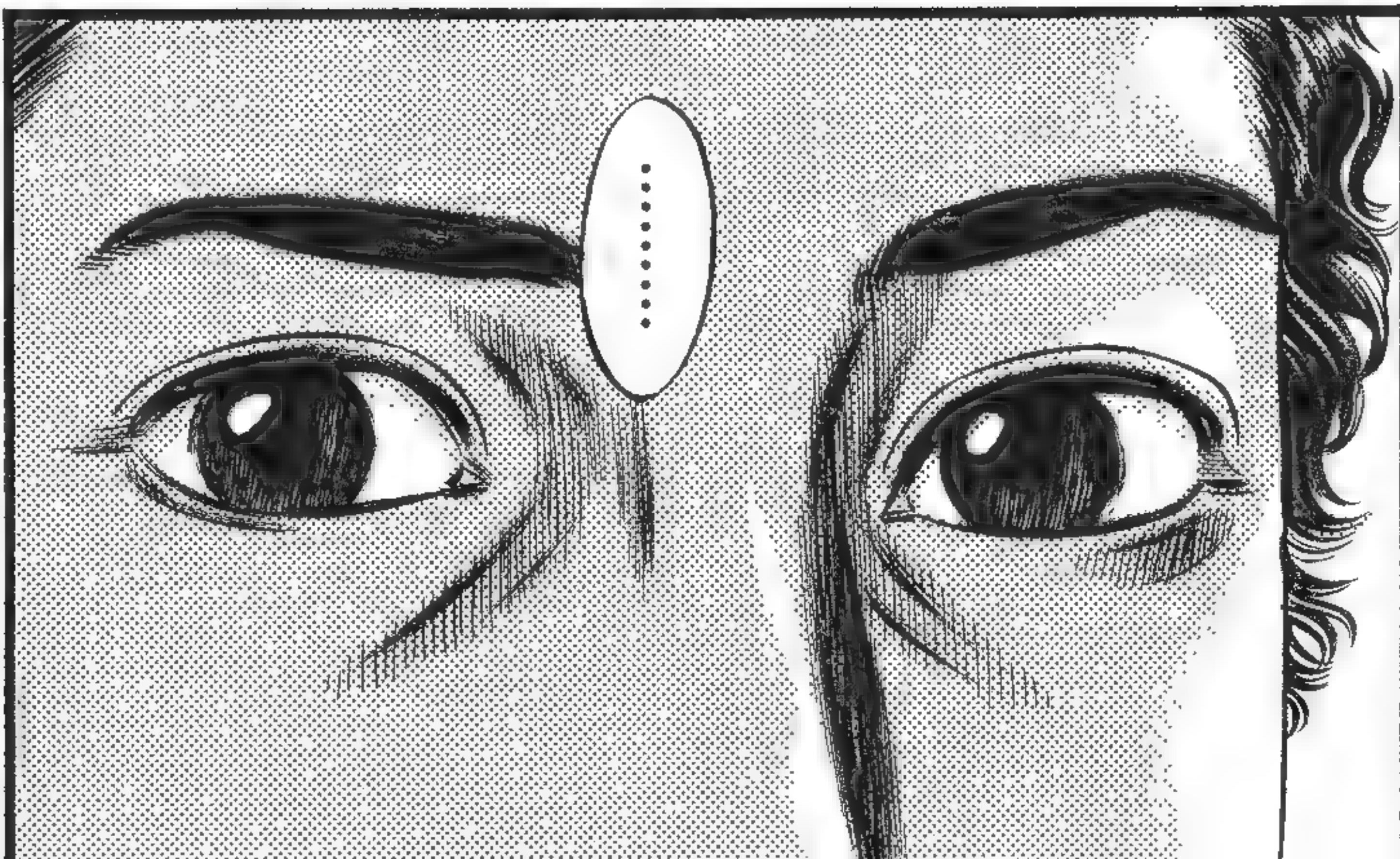
BUT
LISTEN.



YOU HAVE
TO MOVE
FORWARD. YOU
KNOW THAT,
RIGHT?



HELLOO?!







IT'S NOT
GOOD TO
TELL LIES.

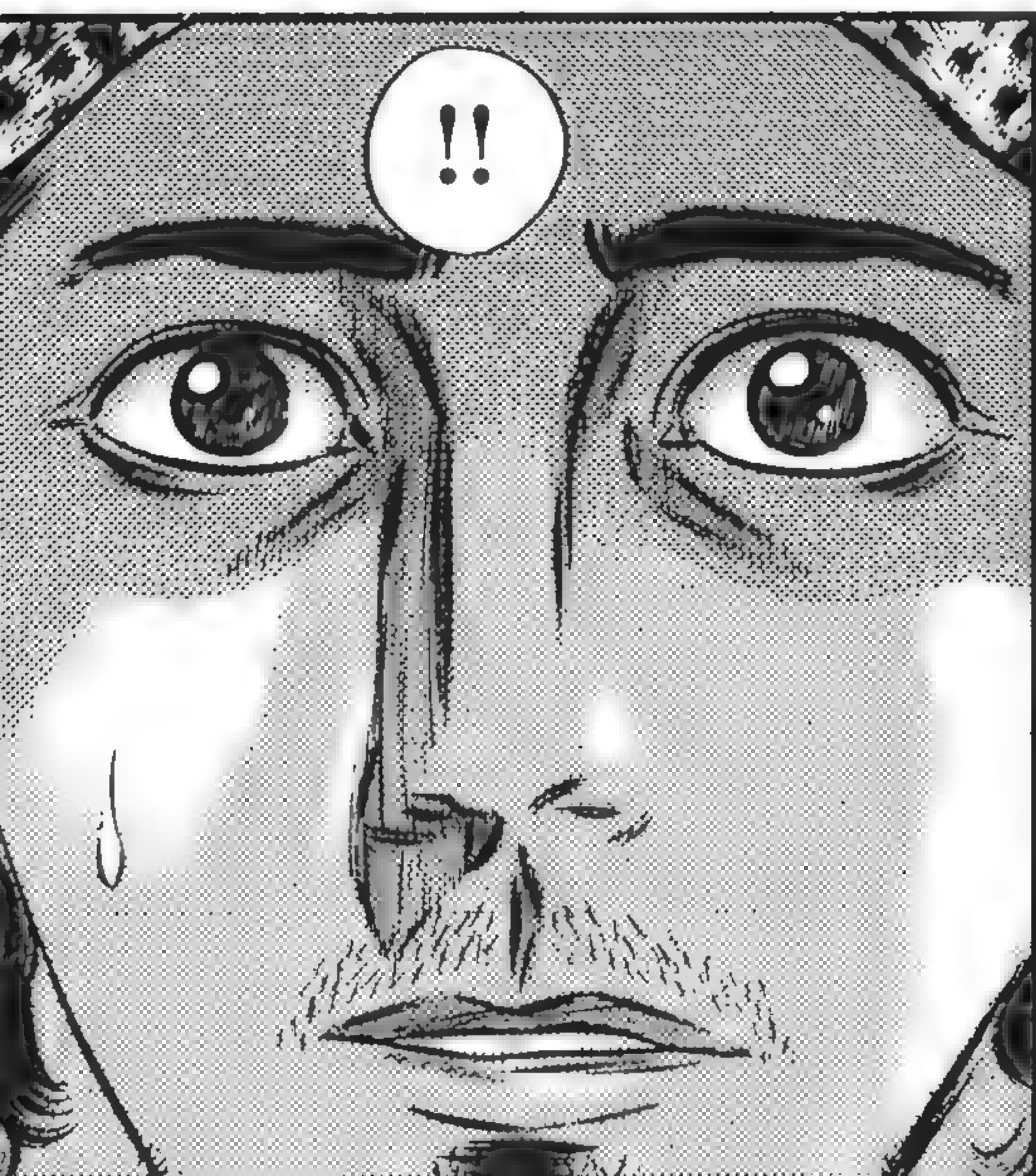
?!



.....
?



YOU
CAN'T JUST
SPEW OUT
WHATEVER
WORDS POP
INTO YOUR
HEAD.



!!



I KNOW IT'S
SCARY TO BE
VULNERABLE,
BUT SHARING
YOUR TRUE
FEELINGS IS
WORTH IT. I
PROMISE.

THEY HAVE
TO BE
HONEST.











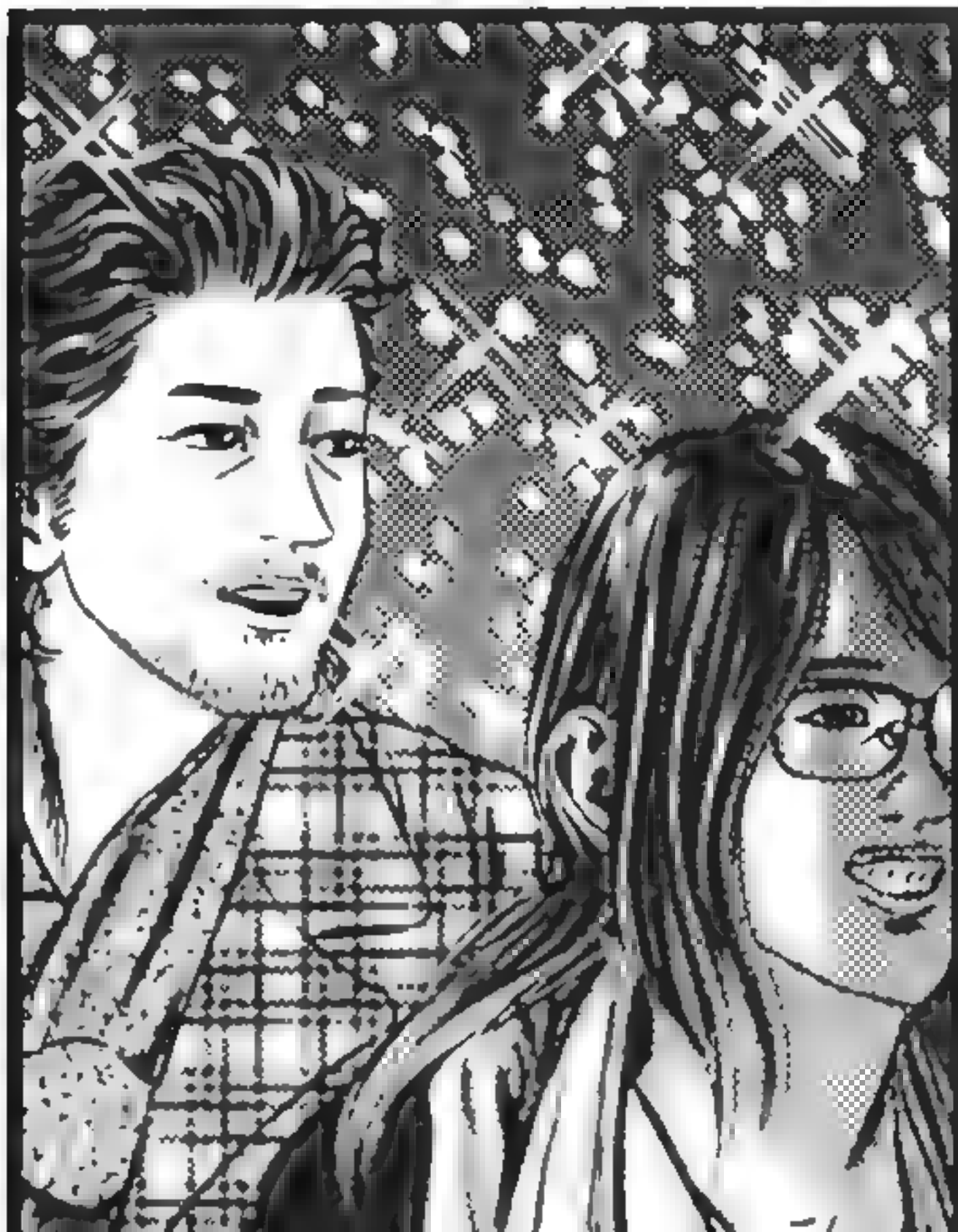
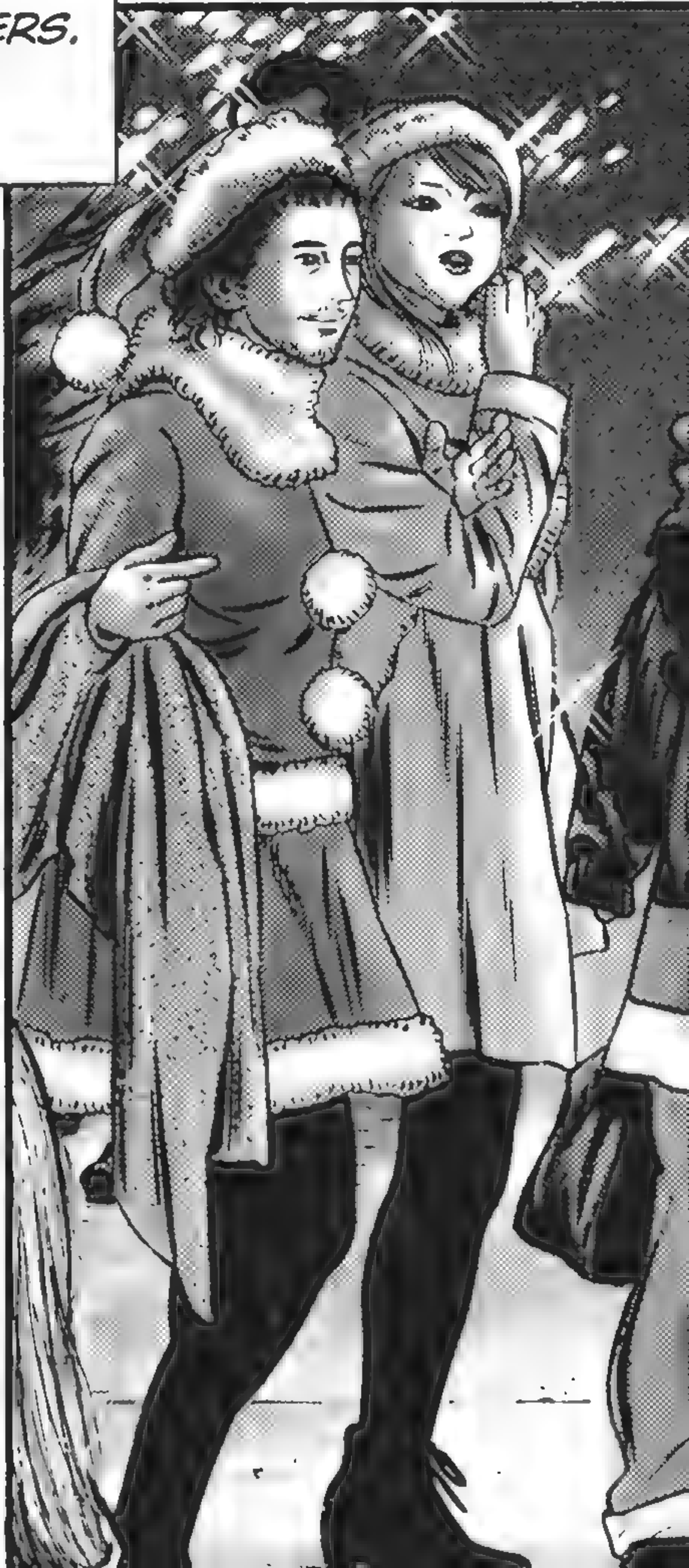




EVERY
HOMUN-
CULUS
IS ME,
MYSELF.



THEY'RE
NOT
MONSTERS.





THEY'RE
NOT IN MY
HEAD...



BUT
THEY'RE
NOT
REALITY,
EITHER.





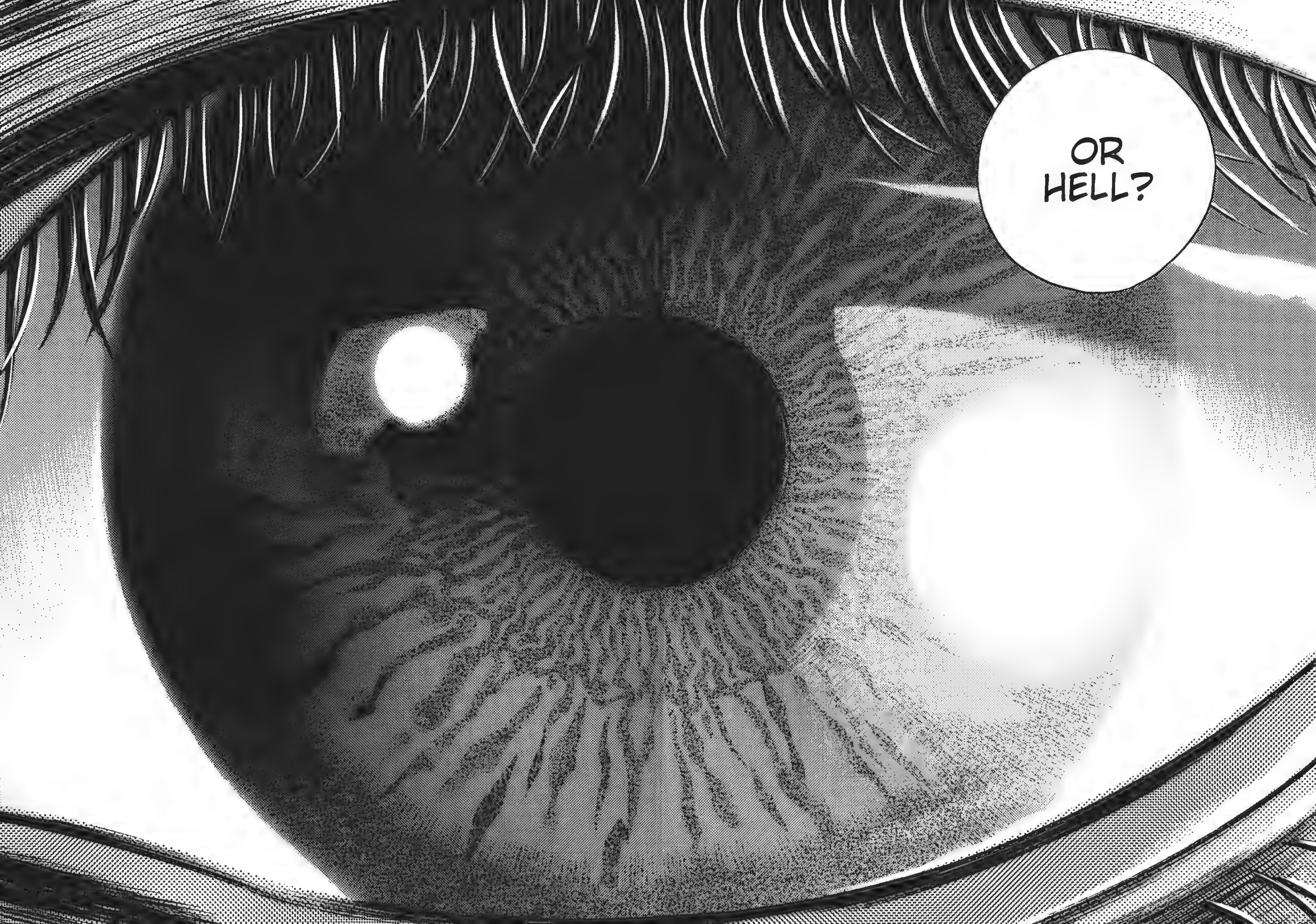
THEY'RE
SIMPLY
TRUE.







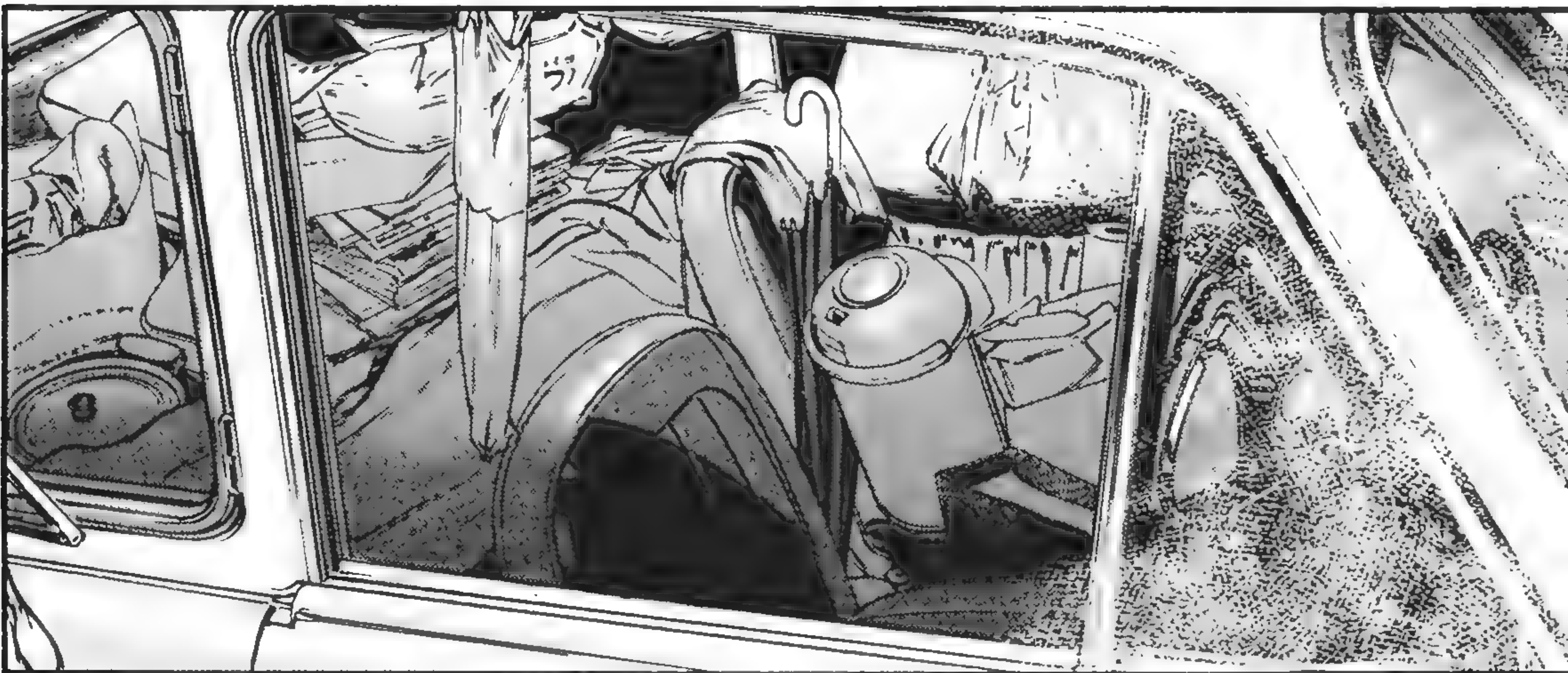
IS THIS
HEAVEN?



OR
HELL?

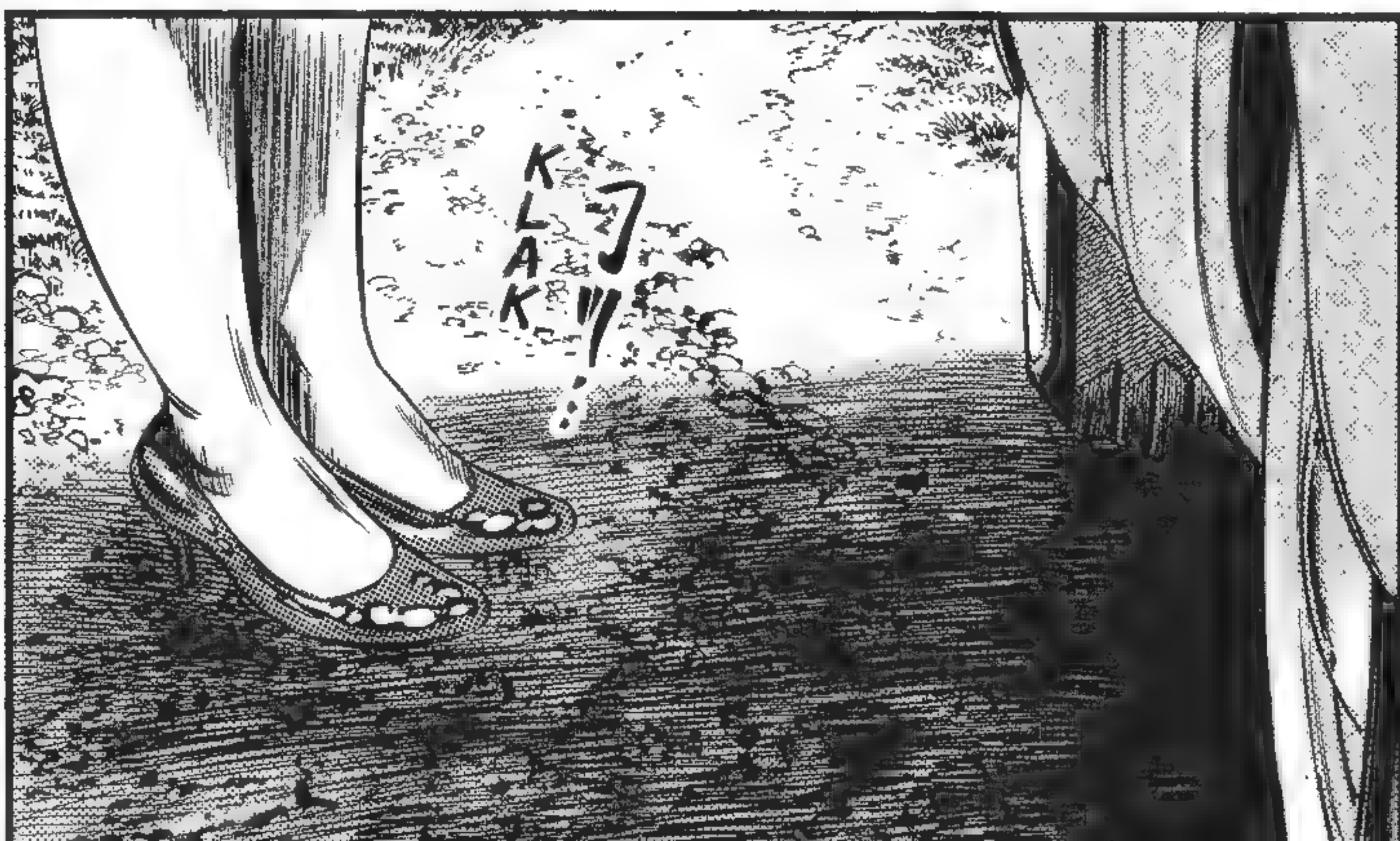
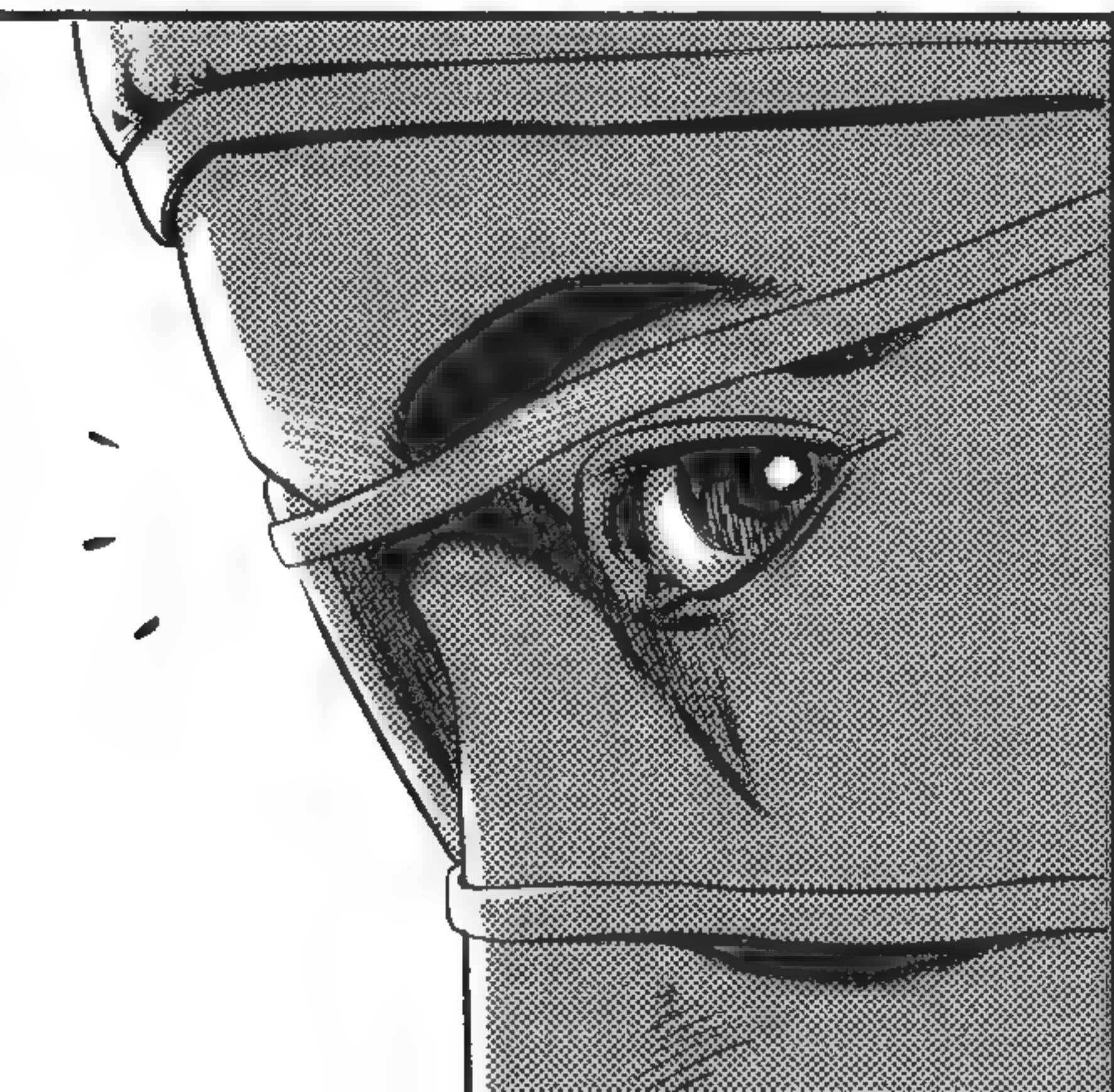
ONE
YEAR
LATER.



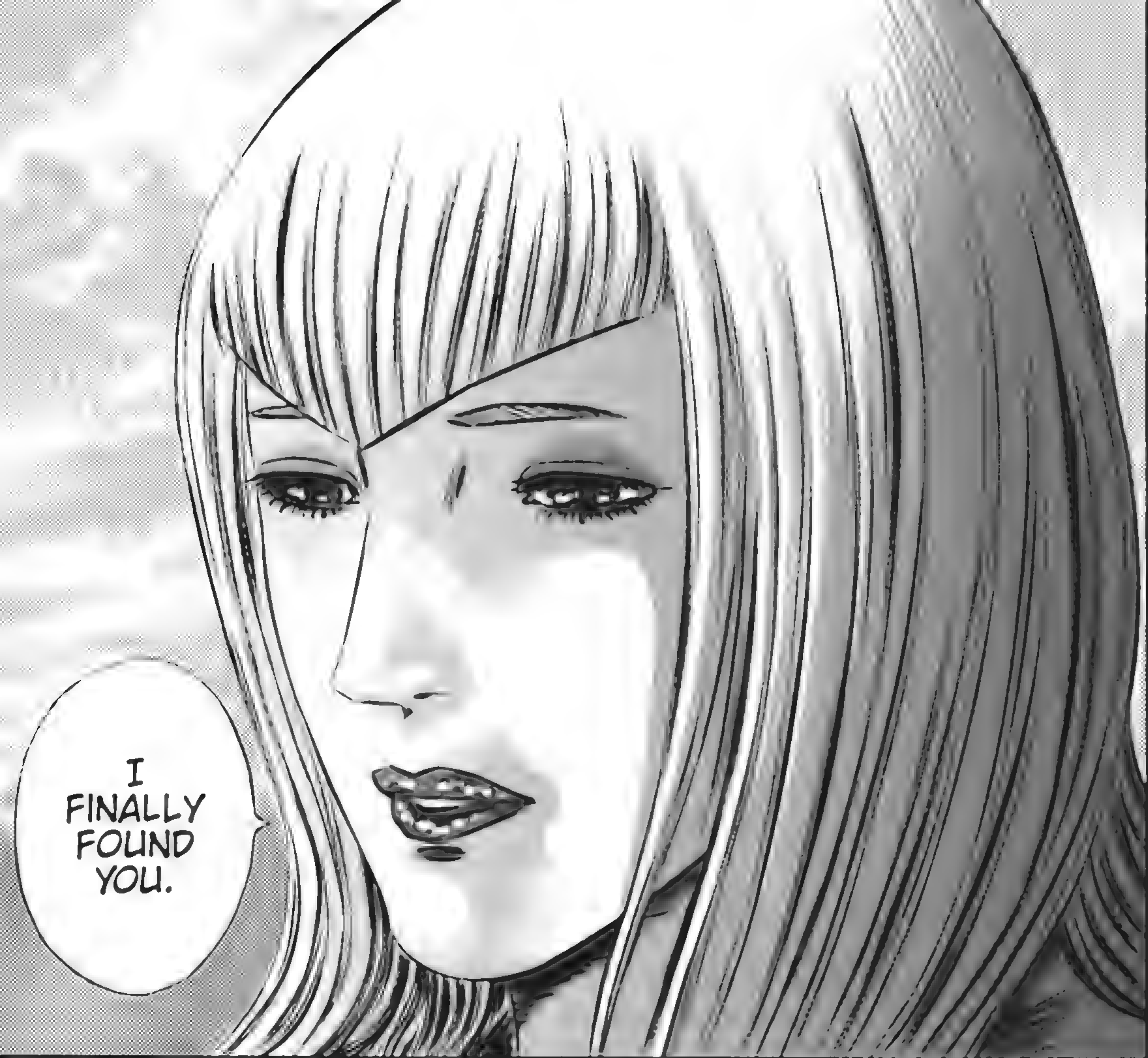


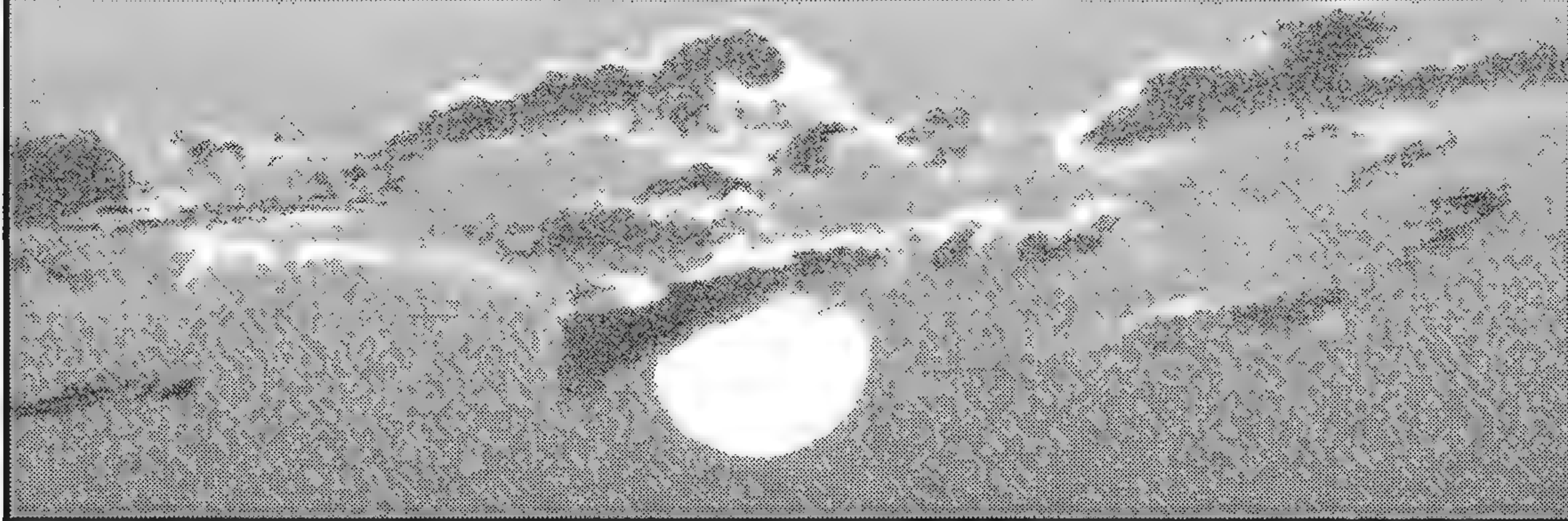




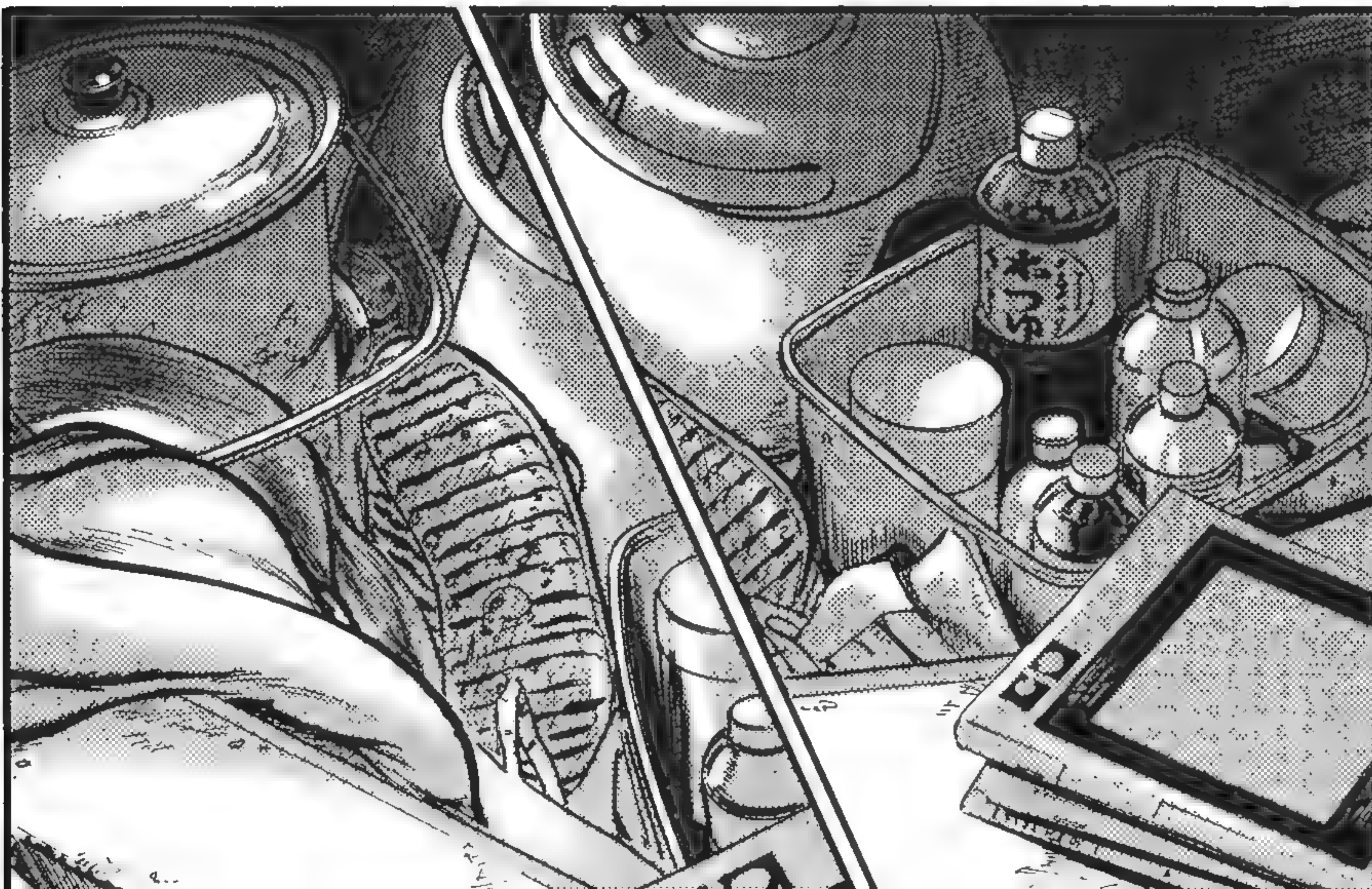


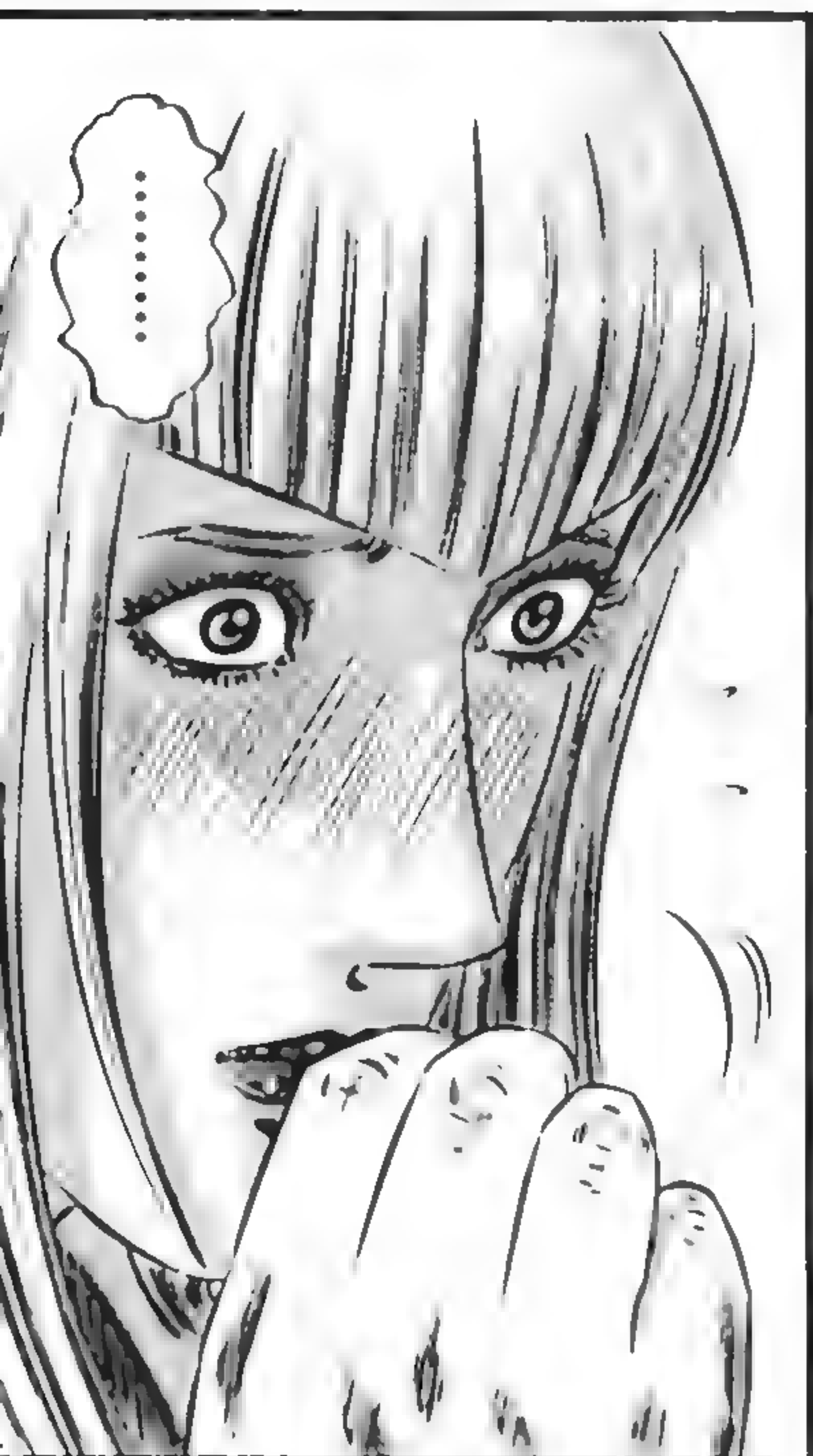




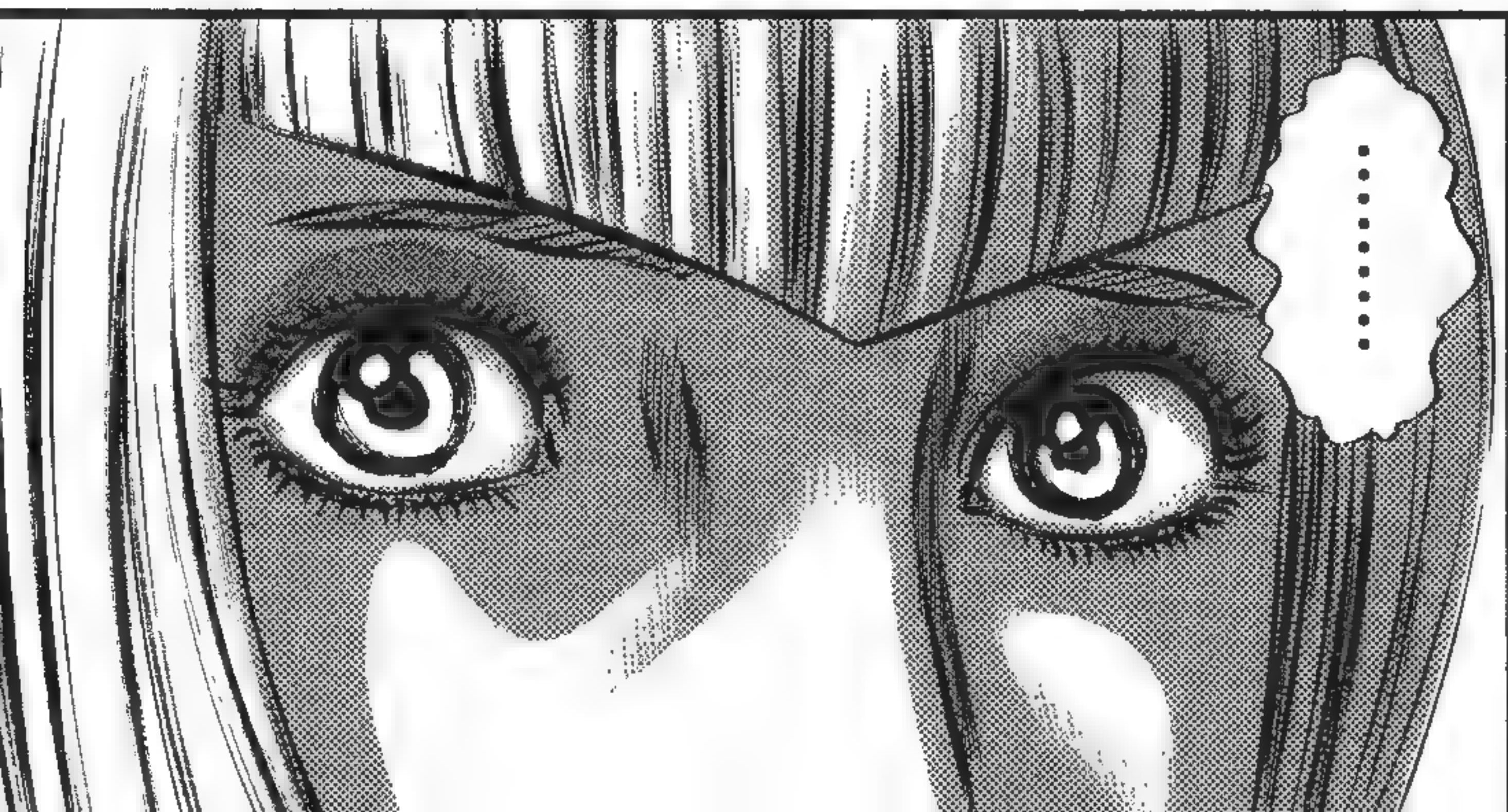
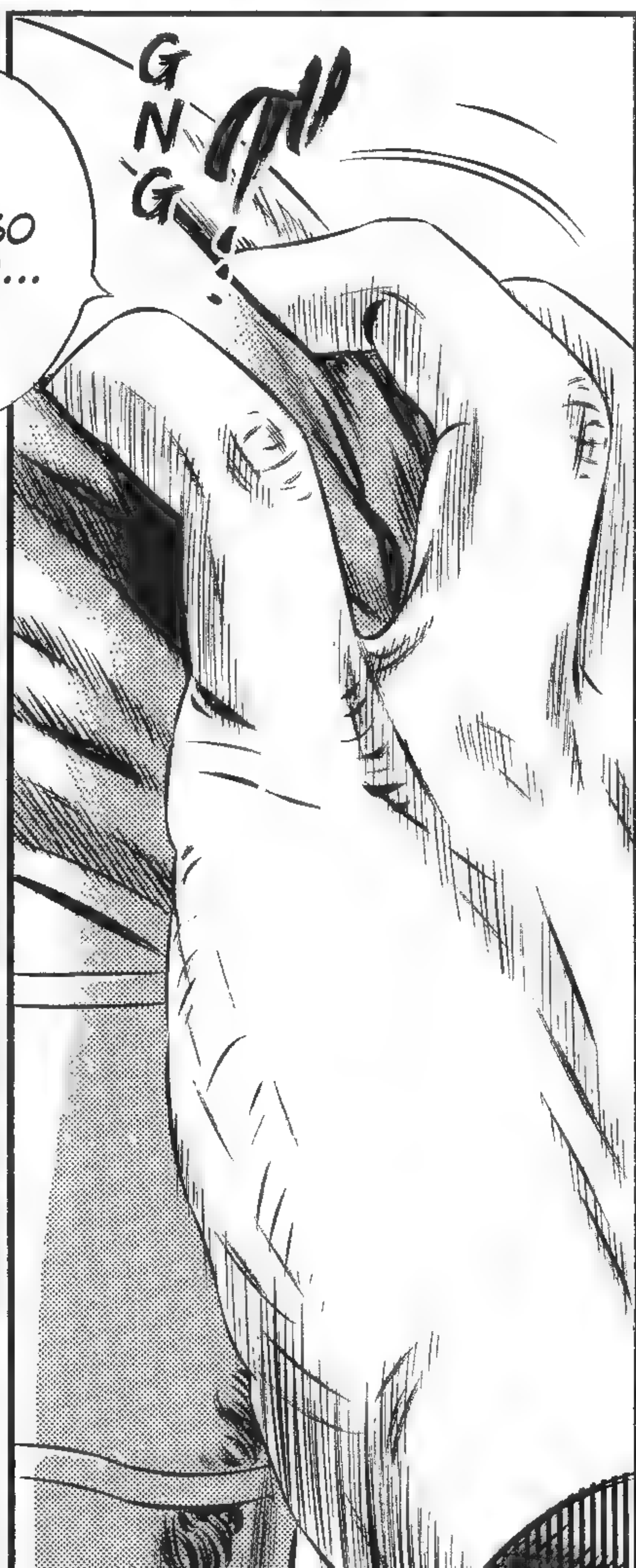
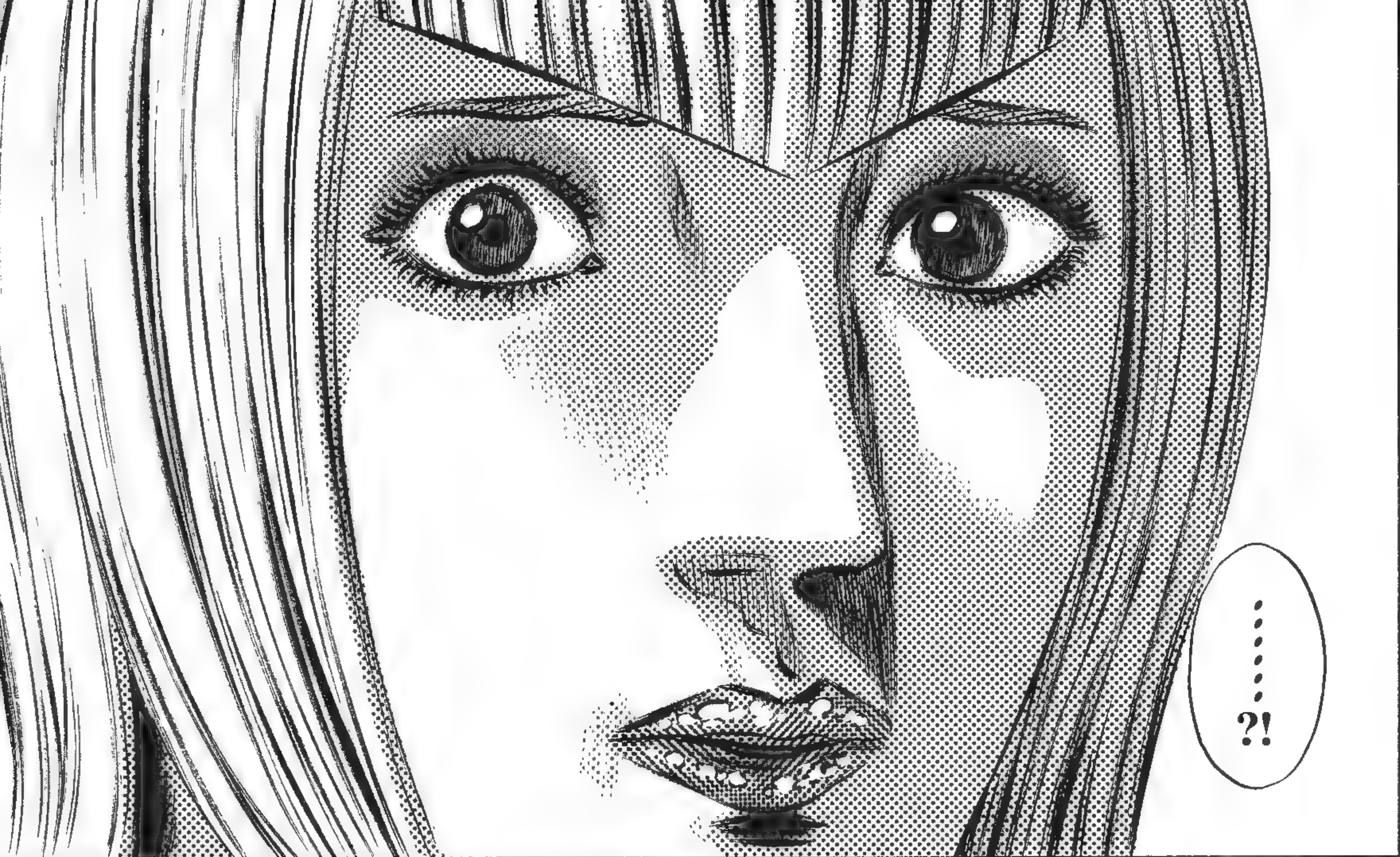


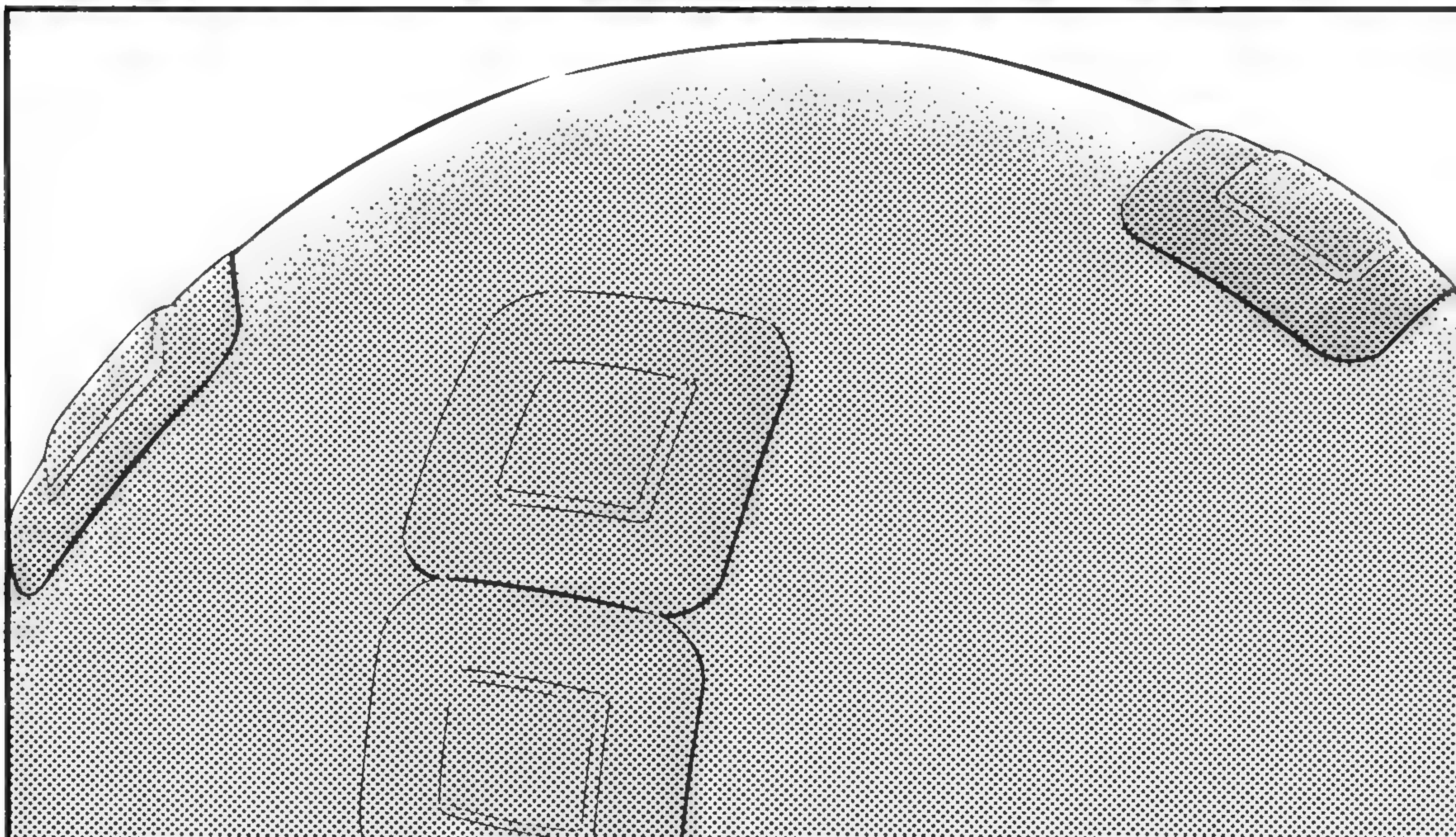
Bottle: Soup







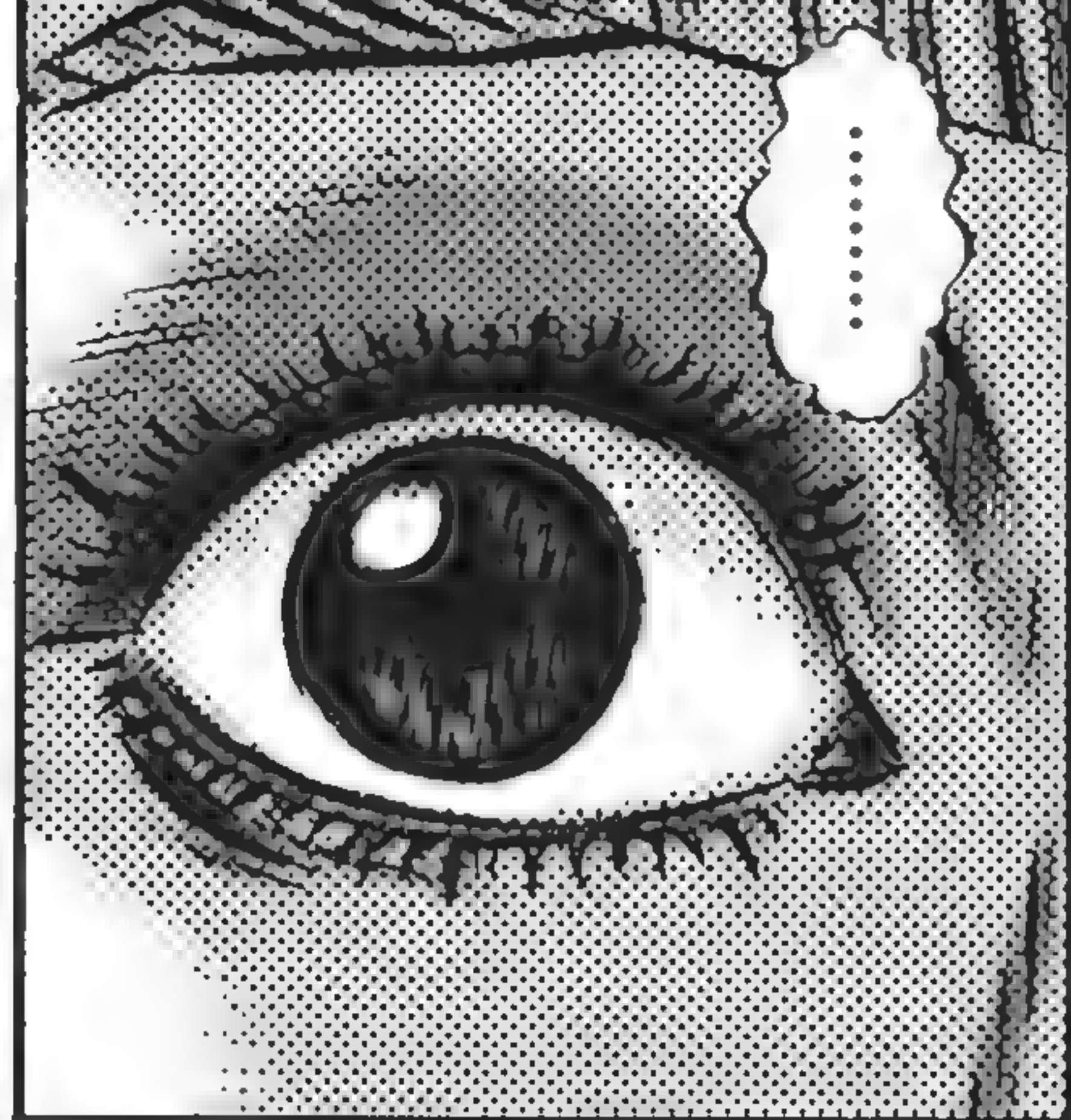




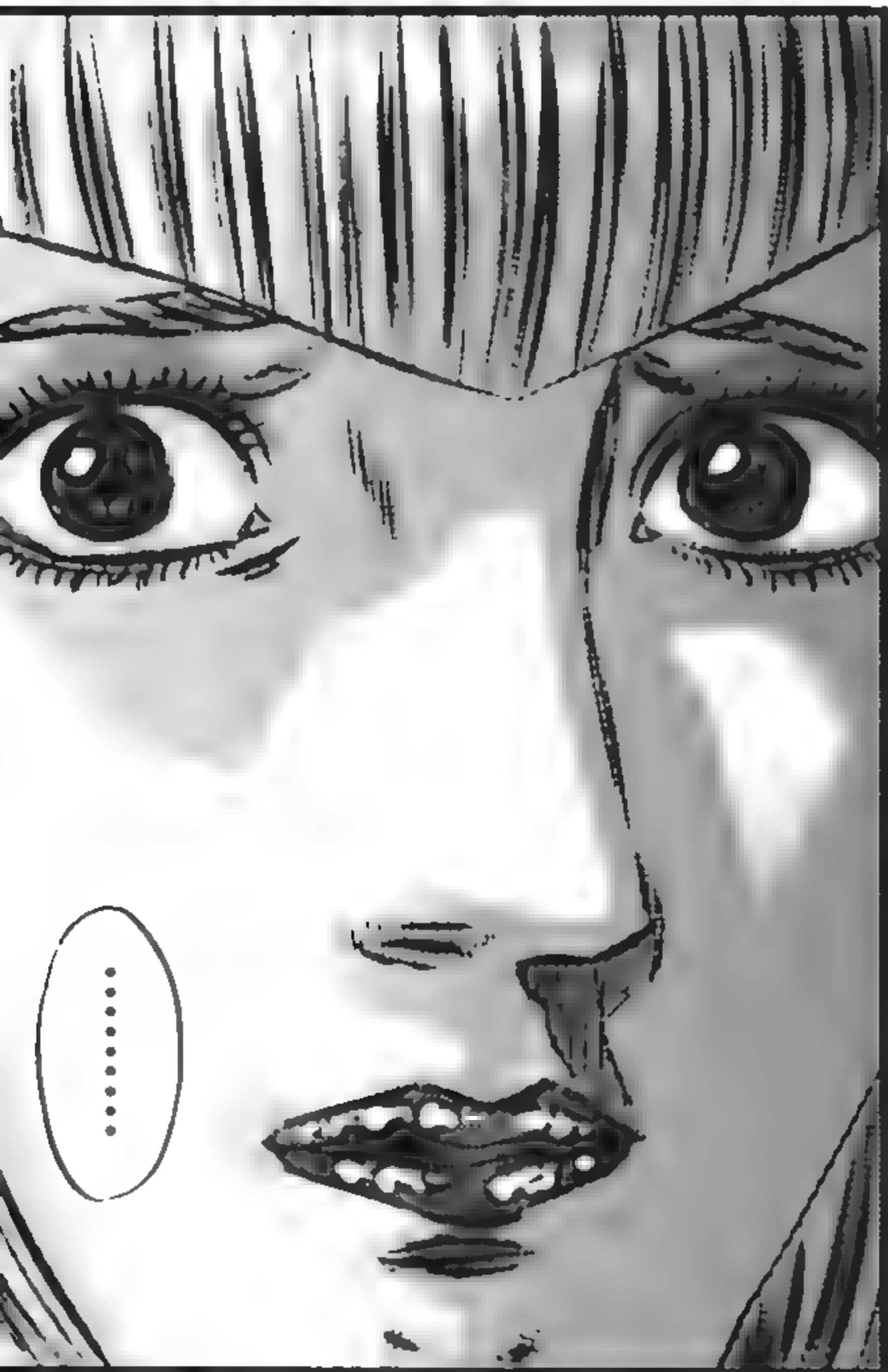


I TRIED TO
SHOW HER,
BUT SHE WAS
USELESS IN
THE END.

THAT WOMAN,
THAT SO-
CALLED
"NANAKO"...



YOU'VE
COME
AT THE
PERFECT
TIME.



I WAS
JUST ABOUT TO
START LOOKING
FOR SOMEONE
NEW WHO'D
SEE ME.



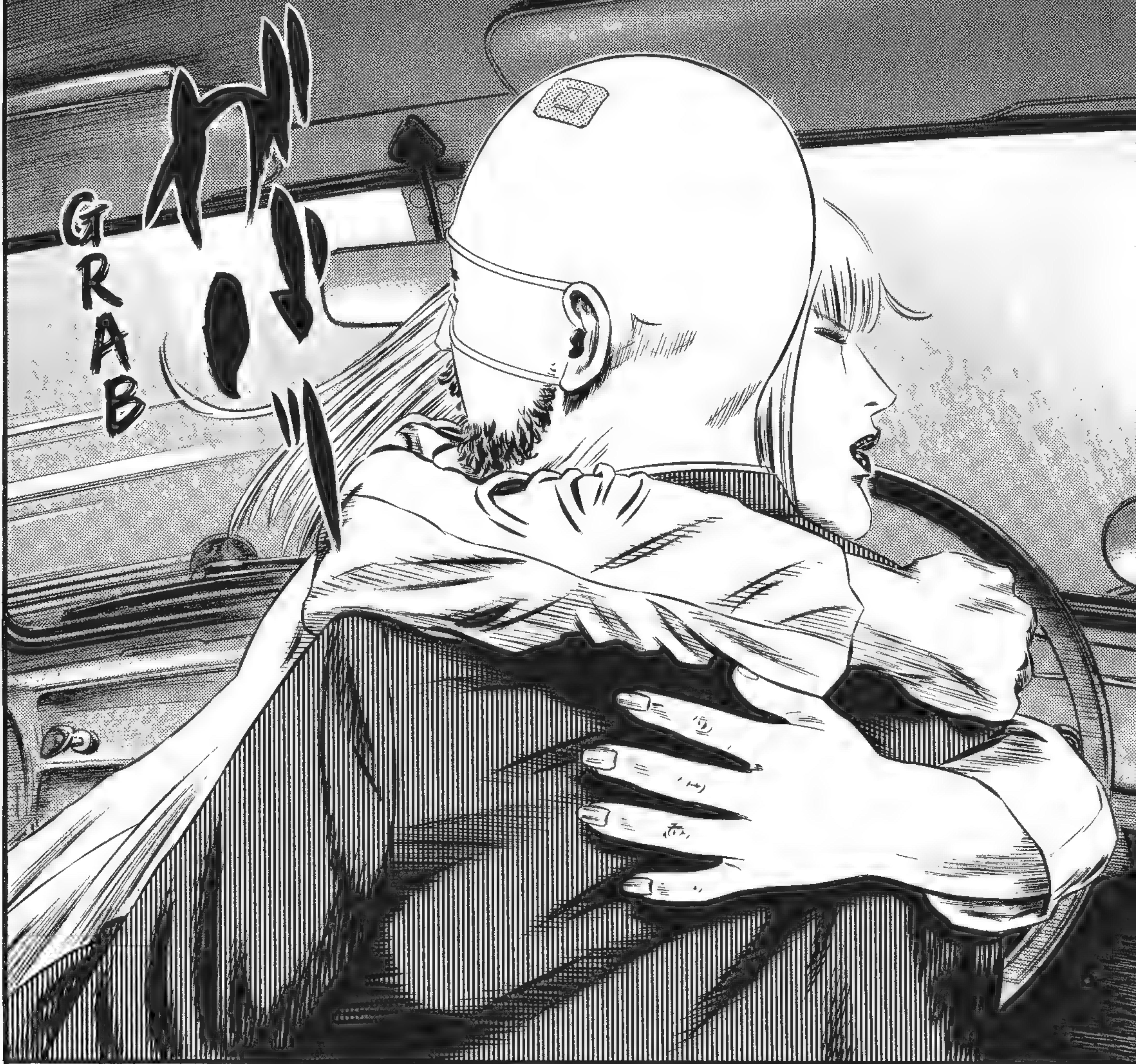
ALTHOUGH
...

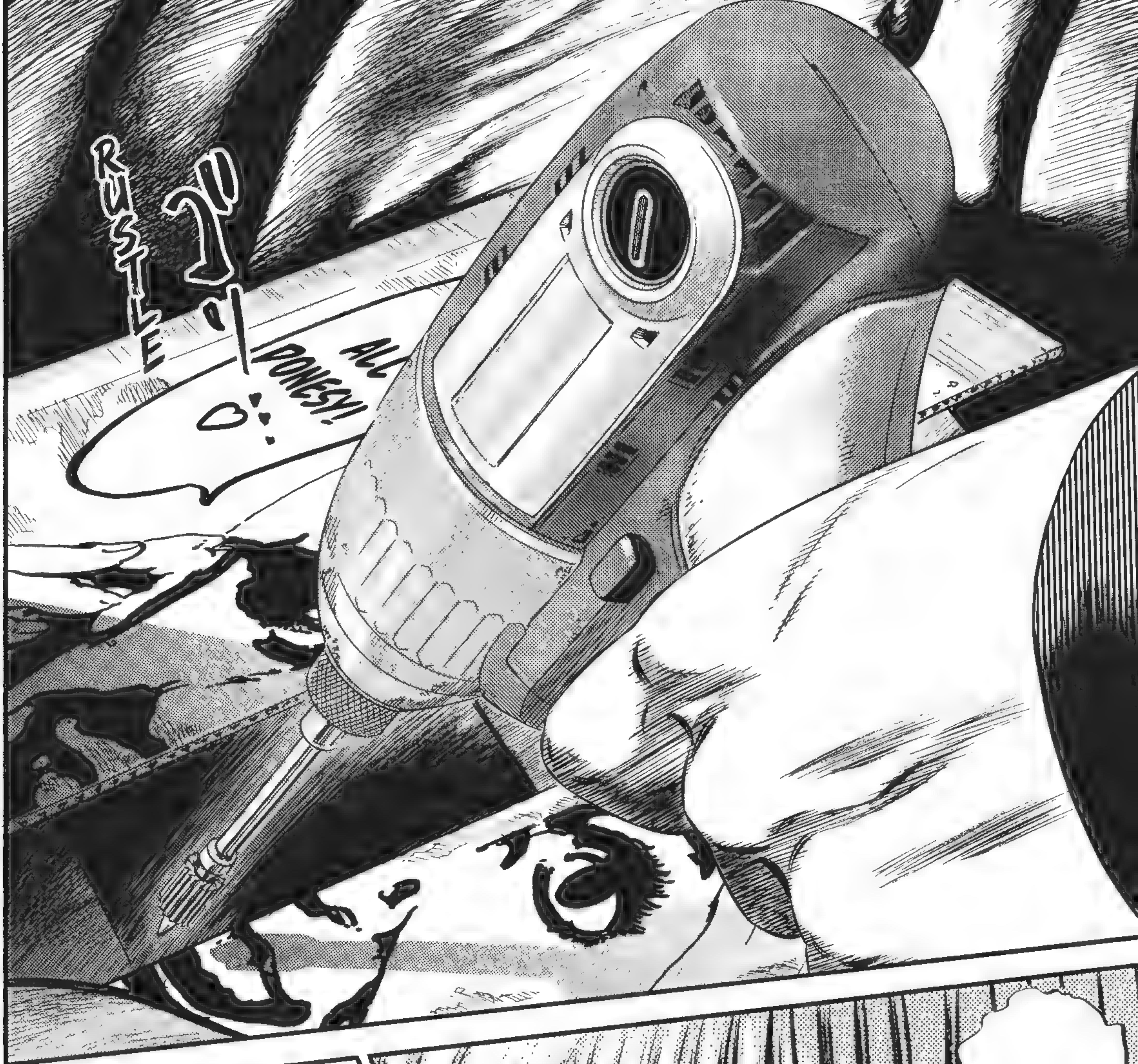


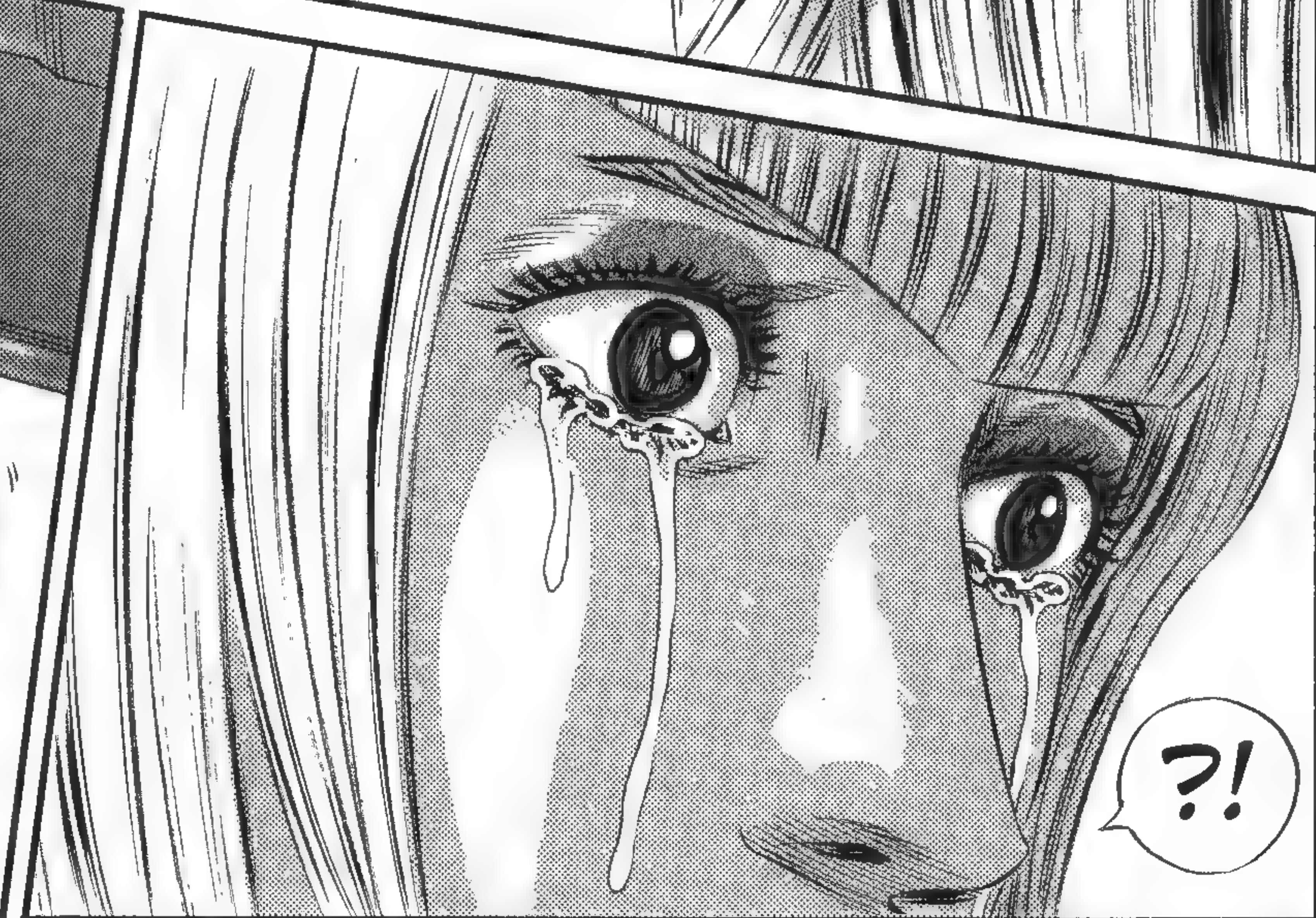
I GUESS THAT'S
ALL I HAVE
BEEN DOING.
SEARCHING AND
SEARCHING...



YOU'LL
LOOK AT
THE REAL
ME, WON'T
YOU?



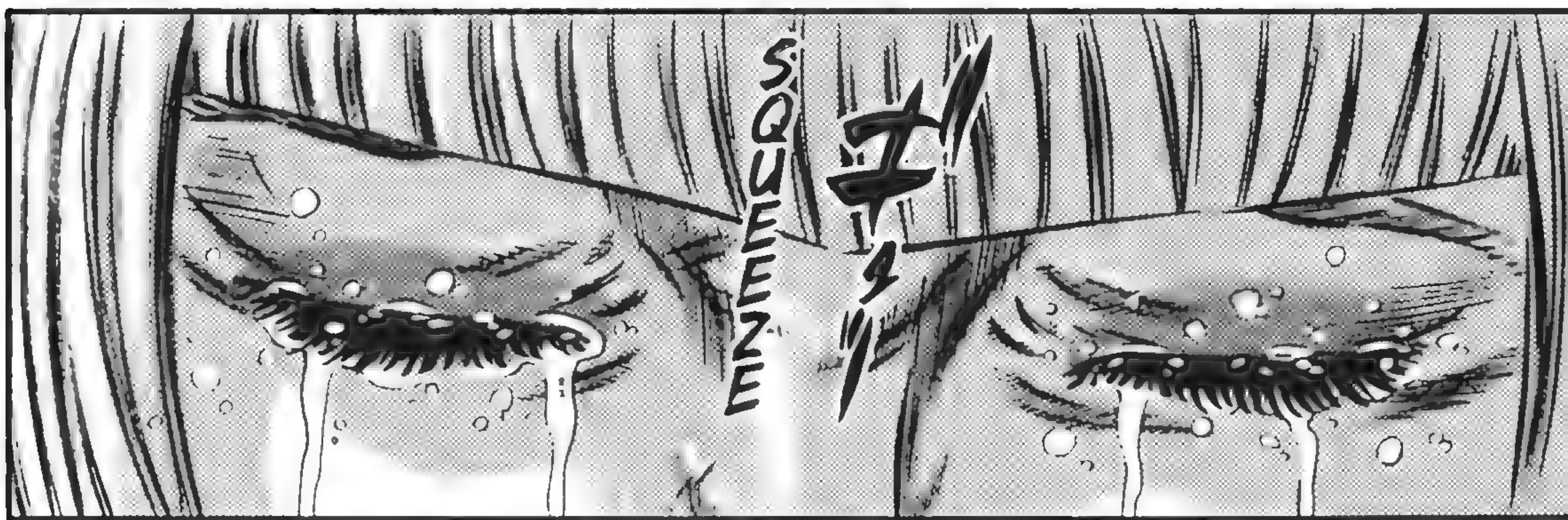






LOOK AT
ME...

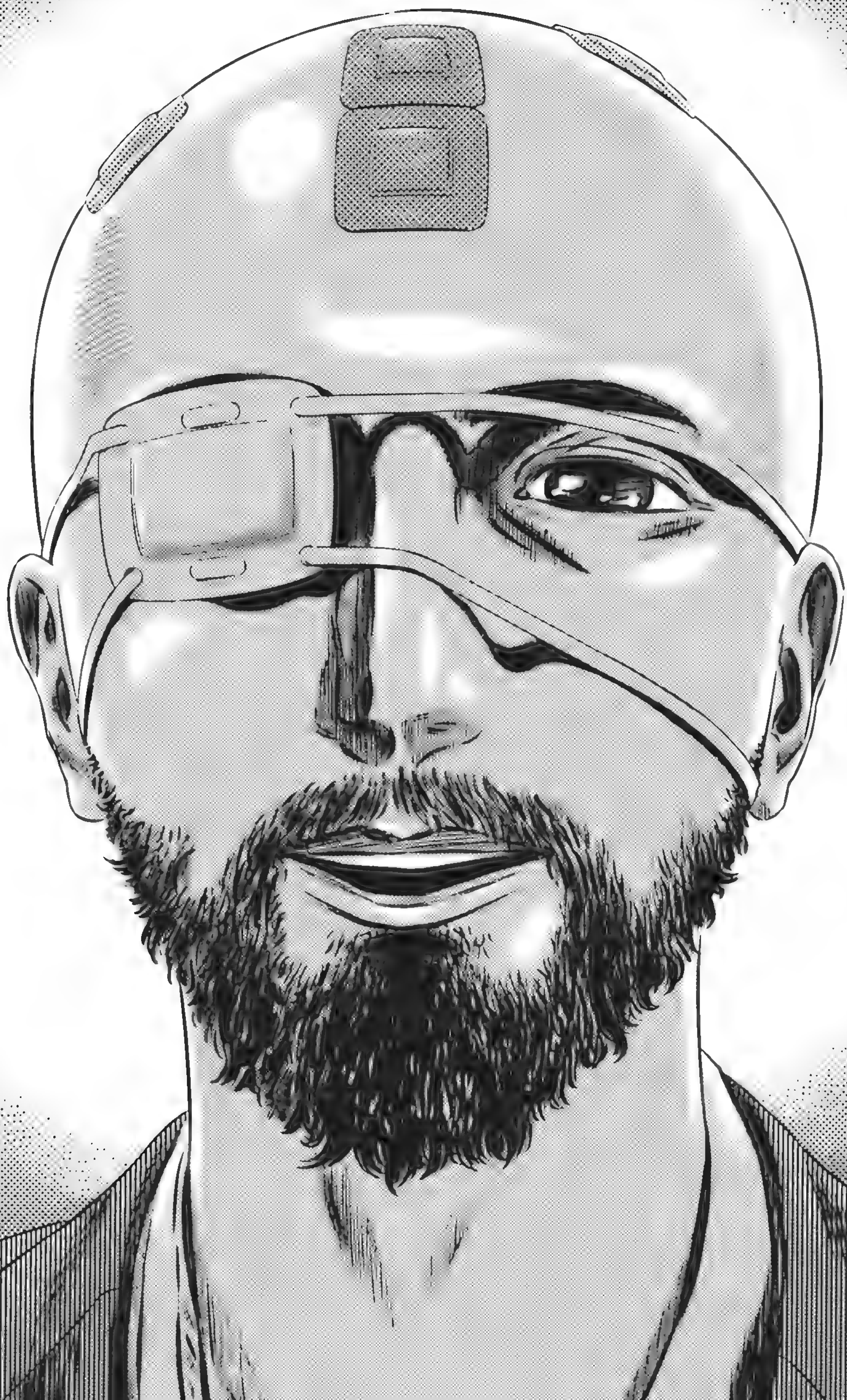
AND I'LL
LOOK AT
YOU.

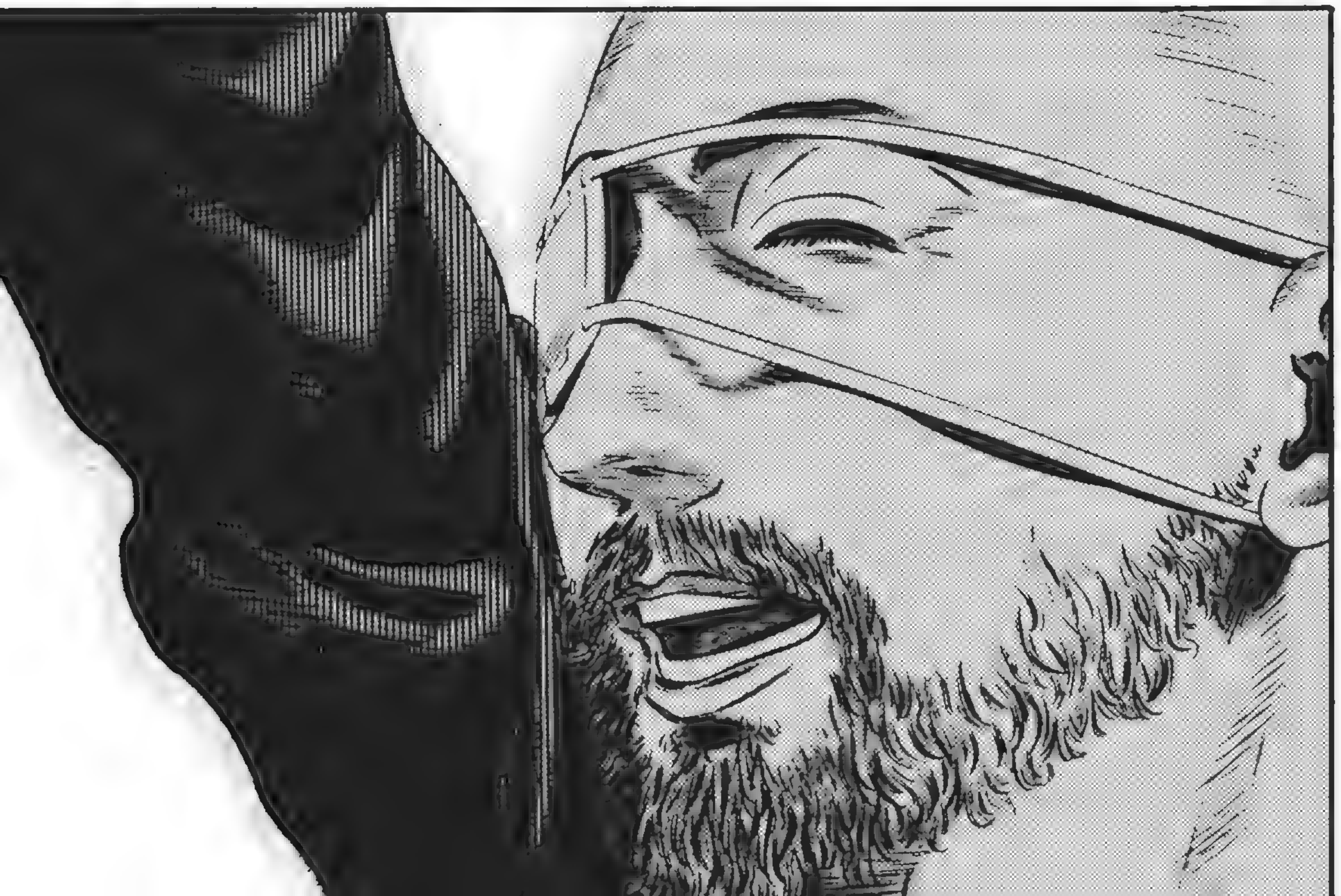
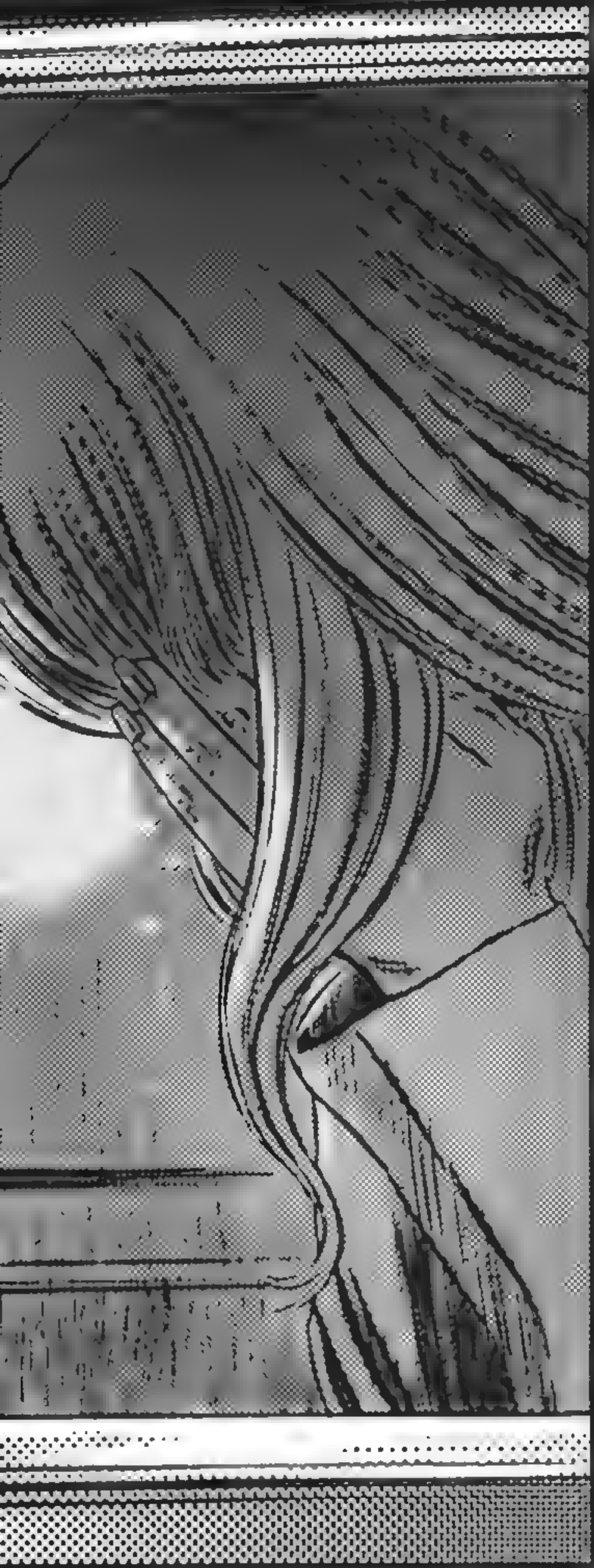














Homunculus / END

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Homunculus

Volume 9-10

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HOMUNCULUS [BUNKO] Vol. 9-10

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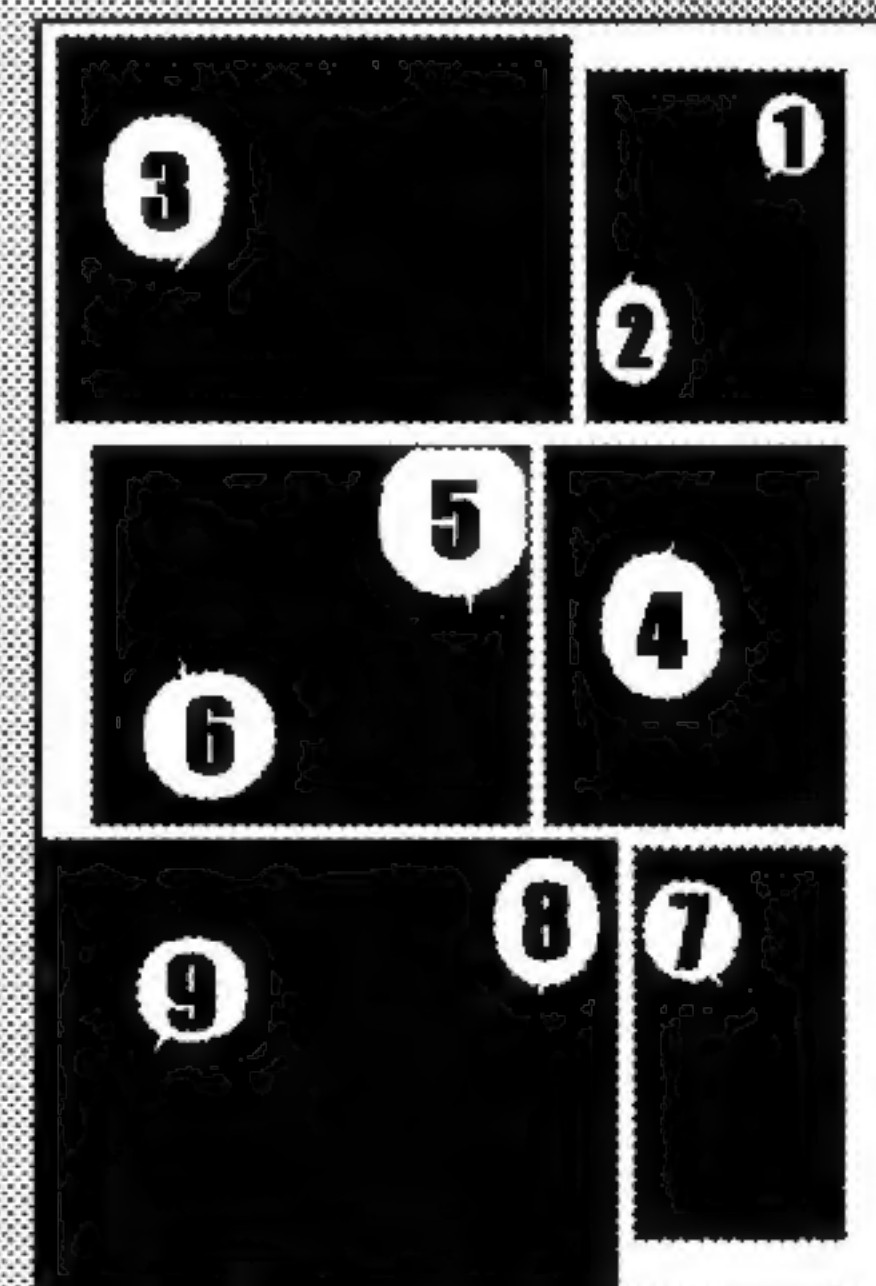
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



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The mysterious woman with the shifting face won't leave Nakoshi alone. In a desperate attempt to uncover his truth and hers, Nakoshi bit the bullet and performed trepanation on himself—and lived to tell the tale. Yet despite the extra hole in his head, the truth remains beyond his reach. Will Nakoshi ever find the answers he's so desperately seeking?

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OLDER TEEN (17+)